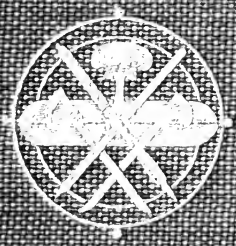
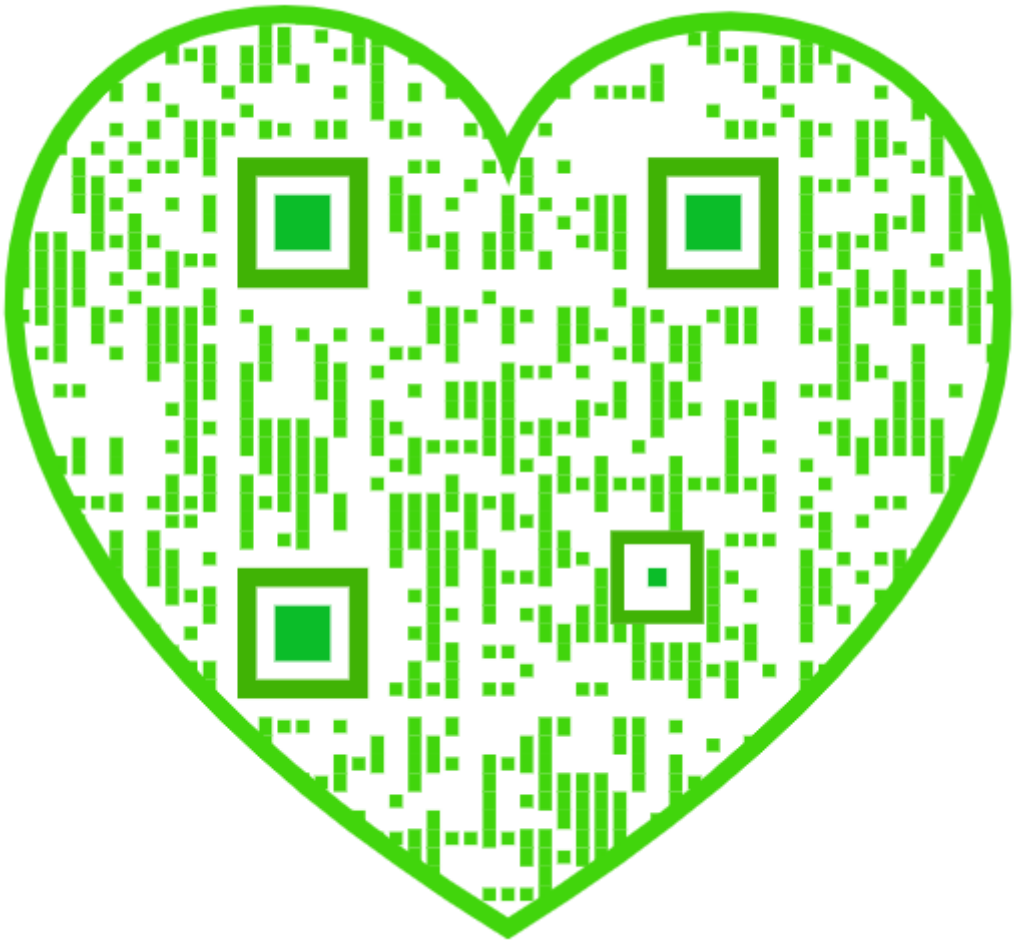
THE HISTORY OF ENGRAVING

FROM ITS INCEPTION TO THE TIME OF THOMAS BEWICK



STANLEY AUSTIN



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THE HISTORY OF . . . ENGRAVING .

SULTAN MAHOMET II.
Earliest known engraved portrait

THE HISTORY OF ENGRAVING

FROM ITS INCEPTION TO THE TIME OF THOMAS BEWICK

BY

STANLEY AUSTIN

EIGHTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS

NEW YORK: CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
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Hist. Dic.

PREFACE

The following pages are written with the express purpose of giving, in a concise and popular form, such account of the History of Engraving as it is possible to give within our limited knowledge of this debatable subject.

Standard works on this subject are costly and scantily illustrated, and I have found reason to traverse many opinions which have been before expressed. I therefore acknowledge my indebtedness to the distinguished Authors who have laboured in this thorny field before me, and whose conclusions I have quoted. My thanks are due to the Keeper of Prints and Drawings at the British Museum, to Dr W. M. Sharples,

and to others who have been kind enough to place their collections at my disposal for the purpose of illustration; and my acknowledgment is also due to my friend Louis Cecil, for literary assistance rendered during the progress of the work.

STANLEY AUSTIN

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THE HISTORY OF ENGRAVING

CHAPTER I

ITS FABLED OR ROMANTIC ORIGIN

Fascination attends every step in the History of Engraving, not alone because of the imperishable interest with which the art is invested, but also because attraction is an inevitable accompaniment of mystery; and, so far as engraving is concerned, where there is not mystery there is myth, and where there is neither of these there is romance. That the last should exist should not, rightly, be a cause of complaint, for Art is the child of romance, which, cradled in dreams, has ripened into undying reality. It is the Aphrodite of imagination, and, like its parent, is possessed of endless charm. But although willing forgiveness may be

extended to romance, it is not equally easy to forgive mystery or to accept fable; hence inquiry has been persistent in its endeavour to trace the origin of an art which has added lustre to its twin sister Painting, and has conferred so much happiness and benefit upon the human race. For engraving does more than reproduce the rare and the beautiful; it often expresses direct the thoughts of masters of the creative faculty—giving reality to dreams without the aid of brush or pencil, or, much more frequently, heightening the charm of an original, and lifting the work of the artist from a realm of solitude to send it forth to all the world.

An immensity of speculation has been indulged in respecting the original of engraving, and the art has been spoken of as having emanated from the, till now, forbidden land of Thibet and from the remote civilisation of China—the burden of proof being quite ignored. And yet, in order to find information respecting it, or rather mention made of it, one need go no further than the Bible. In the xxxvth chapter of Exodus, in relating the building of the tabernacle, we read that Moses said to the children of

Israel: "See, the Lord hath called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; and he hath filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship. . . . And he hath put in his heart that he may teach, both he and Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. Them hath he filled with wisdom of heart, to work all manner of work, *of the engraver*, and of the cunning workman"; and in the xxxixth chapter: "And they made the plate of the holy crown of pure gold, and wrote upon it a writing *like to the engravings of a signet*, 'Holiness to the Lord.'" Upon the face of it this appears to indicate that Bezaleel and Aholiab were the first to practise and teach the art of engraving on metal, though the carving and scarabs was long before their time. However this may be, to travel into China for the origin of the art is unsatisfactory, since the known evidence is of a somewhat flimsy nature. Be that as it may, let us see what is said. Du Halde, in his *Description de l'Empire du Chine*, 1736, tells us that the Chinese printed on silk or cloth, from wooden

type, in the reign of Ming Tsong, the second monarch of the Tartar Dynasty, B.C. 50, and he suggests that the art of block printing was practised by them B.C. 1120, basing his contention upon the utterance of the Emperor Von Vang, who in his philosophic sayings has the following—"As the stone Me (ink) which is used to blacken the engraved character can never become white, so a heart blackened by vice will always retain its blackness." The deductions of Du Halde from this sentence do not appear to me at all convincing, nor do they seem to warrant the assumption of Papillon in his *Traité de la Gravure en Bois*, or of Jansen in his *Essai sur l'Origine de la Gravure*, that it is a *proof* of the antiquity of the art of printing in China. Unfortunately assumption is not proof, and no more direct evidence is offered of *printing* from the engraved characters of B.C. 1120 than there is of a like process being carried out from the engraved plates of Bezaleel and Aholiab in B.C. 1495 or thereabouts, but any way, at least three hundred and fifty years before the wisdom of Von Vang was given to the world.

Our own diarist Evelyn,[1] in his *Sculptura* (1755), favours the idea that we are indebted to China for the origin of the art. He says—

"Sculpture and Chalcography seem to have been of much ancienter date in China than with us; where all their writings and printed records were engraven either on copper plates or cut in tablets of wood, of which some we possess, and have seen more, representing (in ill pictures), landskips, stories and the like. Josephus Scaligen affirms that our first letters in Europe were thus cut upon wood, before they invented the *typas æneos* (metal types), instancing in a certain *Horologium B. Marie*, which he says he had seen printed upon parchment a great while since; but Semedo (*History of China*) would make the world believe that the forementioned Chinese have been possessed of this invention about sixteen hundred years; some others affirm three thousand seven hundred. However, that they were really masters of it long before us is universally agreed upon; and it is yet in such esteem amongst them that the very artisan who compounds the ink for the press is not accounted amongst the mechanic professors, but is dignified with a liberal salary and particular privileges."

It will be observed that Evelyn only offers

[1] *Sculptura; or, the History of Chalcography*, p. 41.

hearsay evidence, of the value of which he is distinctly doubtful.

The great temptation to the searcher after truth in connection with engraving and its origin, is to travel wide of the mark, and while endeavouring to trace the history of the process, to miss the vital point, which is the history of printing from the process. However regrettable it may be, it is none the less true that when we approach the question from this standpoint we are not much better off, for the nearest approach to evidence which has hitherto been forthcoming is, to a certain extent, shadowed by romance; but whether or not this is sufficient to discredit the story is a matter of opinion. I will tell the oft-told tale again, and endeavour to place clearly the reasons which should induce belief in it, or beget unbelief, and leave my readers to form their own judgment.

It was in the year 1719, or 1720, that Papillon was sent by his father—who, among other things, was a decorator—to the villa of Captain de Greder, a Swiss, at Bagneaux, near Mont Rouge, in order to arrange for and undertake personally some mural decoration. One part of his task was to ornament

the shelves of the library, and during the dinner-hour the youth examined and dipped into volumes of interest, particularly those which were scarce and ancient. Finding him thus engaged, Captain de Greder told him that he had some rare books which had been lent to him by a brother officer, M. Spirchtvel. These he showed him, and one small volume contained eight engravings and some verses descriptive of the actions of Alexander the Great. Papillon and his host discussed the question of the origin of engraving, and as the volume was written "either in bad Latin or Gothic Italian," neither of which Papillon understood, Captain de Greder translated the introduction and other of the letterpress to him, and the youth wrote it down.[1] This MS. was mislaid, and in 1758, after Papillon had nearly completed his book on engraving, it was discovered between some old sheets of wallpaper. The importance of the manuscript was at once apparent, for it detailed how the art of engraving on wood and printing therefrom was invented and practised by

[1] Telle que je l'écrivis devant lui, et qu'il eût la bonté de me l'expliquer et de me la dicter."—Papillon, *Traité historique de la gravure en bois*, Paris, 1766, p. 84.

the twin son and daughter of Count Alberico Cunio, at Ravenna, in 1285, whereas in his book Papillon had sought to show that the date of its introduction into Europe was during the fourteenth century. Papillon did not stop to correct what he had written, but just planked the romantic story in and let it tell its own tale. The history is that the Count Alberico Cunio married a lady against the wish of his family, and by her had twins, a son and a daughter. He was compelled by his father to renounce his wife and marry again, but the offspring were recognised and brought up in his home circle. The gifted twins were kinsfolk of Pope Honorius IV., and the son, when only fifteen years of age, followed his father, a soldier, and so distinguished himself that he was knighted on the field of battle. In their leisure, the brother and sister, who had facile pencils, devised a system of cutting their sketches in wood and printing copies thereof for presentation to their kinsman the Pope, and to their parents and friends, and the little book which Papillon saw was the result. Unfortunately the volume which is possessed of such unique interest has never been seen

since, and we are therefore reduced into determining the value of Papillon's statement as judged primarily by his own character, and also by the internal evidence of probability which the story bears. The first and most regrettable feature is that Papillon himself did not know whether the volume was written in Latin or Italian ; it was translated to him by M. de Greder, so that what follows is a translation of a translation. We must, however, recollect that Papillon handled, examined, and described the engravings and that he had absolutely no motive to be unveracious. The introduction to this remarkable volume was as follows :—

"THE HEROIC ACTIONS, REPRESENTED IN FIGURES,

"Of the great and magnanimous Macedonian King, the bold and valiant Alexander ; dedicated, presented, and humbly offered to the Most Holy Father, Pope Honorius IV., the glory and support of the Church, and to our illustrious and generous father and mother, by us, Allessandra Alberico Cunio, Cavaliere, and Isabella Cunio, twin brother and sister ; first reduced, imagined, and attempted to be executed in relief with a small knife on blocks of wood, made even and polished by this learned and dear sister ; continued and finished by us together at Ravenna, from the eight pictures of

our invention, painted six times larger than here represented; engraved, explained by verses, and thus marked upon the paper, to perpetuate the number of them, and to enable us to present them to our relations and friends in testimony of gratitude, friendship, and affection. All this was done and finished by us when only sixteen years of age."

As translated by Captain de Greder to Papillon, the inscription ran—

"Les Chevaleureux Faits en Figures,

"Du grand et magnanime Macédonien Roi, le preux et vaillant Alexandre, dédiés présentés et offert humblement au très saint père le Pape Honorius IV., la gloire et le soutien de l'Église, et à nos illustres et généreux père et mère, par nous Alexandre Alberic Cunio, Chevalier, et Isabelle Cunio, frère et sœur jumeaux; premièrement réduits, imaginés et essayés de faire en relief, avec un petit couteau, en tables de bois, unies et polies par cette sçavante et chère sœur, continués et achevés ensemblement à Ravenne, d'après les huit tableaux de notre invention, peints six fois plus grands qu'ici représentés; taillés, expliqués en vers, et ainsi marqués sur le papier pour en perpétuer le nombre, et en pourvoir donner à nos parens et amis par reconnoissance, amitié et affection. Ce fait fini, âgés seulement l'un et l'autre de seize années parfaites."

On the margin of one of the sheets, written in very faint ink and in Italian, which Captain de Greder translated with difficulty, was the following:—"The ground of the wooden blocks must be hollowed deeper that the paper may not touch it any more in receiving the impression," referring to certain blemishes appearing in the engravings which Papillon surmised were printed on dry paper by the simple process of inking the blocks, laying on the paper, and passing the hand over the back to obtain the impression.

Now, first, we must inquire into the history of the volume. According to a written slip inserted in it, which was also translated by Captain de Greder, Count Alberico de Cunio gave the book to Jan. Jacq. Turinne, of Berne, from whom it descended to his grandson, and this gentleman caused a history of the twins, who died in their seventeenth year, to be written. From him the book passed to his daughter, and ultimately came into the possession of M. Spirchtvel, whose mother was a Turinne. Thus far the history of the volume, which has since vanished as mysteriously as many another work of art of incalculable value,

although it has been conjectured to be possible that the library of the Vatican may enshrine a forgotten copy; so now we will inquire what the experts on engraving have to say on the subject. Well, it is particularly noticeable that neither Huber in his *Manuel des Amateurs*, nor Bartsch in his *Pientre Graveur*, notice it, nor does Heineken in his *Idée Générale* or in his *Dictionnaire des Artistes*; but in his *Idée Générale* Heineken goes out of his way to say of Papillon, "Fai vu que cet écrivain est trop ignorant pour être allegne â l'avenir."[1] Later, however, in his *Neue Nachrichten*, 1786, after he had seen Papillon, Heineken says—"I am firmly convinced that he (Papillon) did not invent that which he told me." With respect to Heineken's statement that Papillon was an ignoramus, it is worth noting that Ottley accuses Heineken of a like fault, and says that his work contains "several errors which a little more respect for the labours of other writers, and among the rest for those of Papillon, would have prevented his committing";[2] and Conway goes

[1] *Idée Générale*, p. 239.

[2] Ottley, *History of Engraving*, vol. i. p. 10.

further and remarks—"I give no reference to Heineken, as his descriptions are utterly inaccurate."

Strutt rejects the story, but he falls into error himself, for he writes—"But as Papillon gives this story upon the sole evidence of the Swiss officer, and had never seen any part of the engravings," etc.[1] Yet we have seen that Papillon did see and handle the book, and that it is he who described the prints and conjectured that they were obtained from a pale tint of indigo, in distemper by hand pressure, Captain de Greder merely translating the inscribed matter, or what we should now term letter-press. Ottley sees in the cramped style of the inscription evidence of its not being invented, and surmises that it was a literal translation of a Latin original; and Padre della Valle, with whom Bullett agrees, does not question the narrative, but remarks that Ravenna was the Athens of the fine arts, and some one of the many artists who flocked thither might well have invented the art of engraving in wood for the purpose of impression, and adds his conviction that some

[1] Strutt, *Dictionary of Engravers*, vol. ii. p. 13.

of the initial letters of Dante's MS. were engraved. Zani, in his *Materiali per servire alla storia, etc., dell' Incisione in Rame e in Legno*, 1802, waxes enthusiastic and says—"I would almost assert that to deny the testimony of the French writer would be like denying the existence of light on a fine sunshiny day."

As some critics have carried their animus to the extent of asserting that there is no trace of the existence of a Count Alberico Cunio at the time mentioned, it may be pointed out that his name appears in the *History of Faenza*, 1285, the year in which Pope Honorius, who only reigned some two years, ascended the Papal throne. It appears incredible to me that a French artist of proved veracity and repute should go out of his way to devise a tale containing an immensity of detail, in order to fix the glory of the invention of engraving on wood upon two Italian children. Patriotism, which plays so intense a part in France, is dead against such a supposition; there was no motive for a fraud which destroyed his own written conclusions, and as I do not conceive that Papillon dreamed the romantic story, I

imagine the balance of probability is in its favour. It is but just to note that Chatto, in the historical portions of Jackson's *Treatise of Wood Engraving*, treats the Cunio story with scorn, and marshals quite an army of damaging facts against it; and he suggests that the so-called Cunio plates were copies of the designs of Le Brun, and lays some stress upon the mental lapses of Papillon. But Papillon was a competent man, of whom even Heineken writes—"Cependant Jesuis convaineû que l'Antem, dont je connois le caractère, a écrit tout cela de bonne foi, sans en savoir d'avantage."[1] It is easy to call one with whom we disagree "ignorant," or to describe a detailed narrative as "sentimental fustian," but such phrases are poor argument; it is better, as Lanzi does, to admit that Papillon's account contains things so hard to be believed that "I judge it the safest mode to say nothing about it."[2] Is it, however, less hard to credit that a man of standing would try to deceive the whole world of Art in order to glorify a foreign nation, the while he pulverised his own con-

[1] *Idée Générale*, p. 151.
[2] *Storia Pittorica*, vol. i. p. 74.

clusions? Such folly appears to me to be incredible.

Whether the Cunio story be accepted or rejected is, unfortunately, a matter of no great importance to the inquirer into the history of wood engraving, since between the date of the alleged invention by the twins and the next reliable information respecting the art is a gap of one hundred and thirty-eight years. During this long period we know that the practice of engraving had made huge strides, for on this point we have abundant evidence; but we know very little more, and the story of its progress is based largely upon conjecture. The next absolute datum upon which we can rely is found in a decree of the Government of Venice, discovered by Temanza, which was designed to protect the artists of the city against foreign practitioners, and was conceived in the best spirit of mediæval trades unionism. Before I quote this edict, I may recall—what is well-known—that Venice was undoubtedly one of the greatest artistic centres from a very early period. Lanzi, in his *Storia Pittorica*, asserts that the Company of Painters at Venice was established prior to 1290, but

that the original books were destroyed and new ones commenced in 1436, and he suggests that but for this lamentable occurrence much light might have been shed upon the history of engraving. This is very probable, for the Company of Painters seems to have been comprehensive in its scope and to have included all persons directly or indirectly concerned with the art within its ranks, much as did our own London Guilds in days gone by. Thus the Venetian Guild of St Luke included painters, wood engravers, carvers and gilders, picture-frame-makers, box-makers, and workers in any material, including leather, which was capable of being adorned by the painter's art; and it was to benefit these allied trades that the order was issued. This important decree runs as follows:—

"MccccxLi, October 11.—Whereas the art and mystery of making cards and printed figures, which is used at Venice *has fallen into total decay;* and this in consequence of the great quantity of playing cards and coloured figures printed which are made out of Venice; to which evil it is necessary to apply some remedy; in order that the said artists, who are a great many in family, may find encouragement rather than foreigners: Let it be

ordered and established, according to that which the said Masters have supplicated, that from this time, in future, no work of the said art that is printed or painted on cloth or on paper, that is to say, altar pieces and playing cards, and whatever other work of the said art is done with a brush and printed, shall be allowed to be brought or imported into this city under pain of forfeiting the work so imported, and xxx livres and xii soldi; of which fine one third shall go to the State, one third to the Signor Giustizieri Vecchi, to whom the affair is committed, and one third to the accuser. With this condition, however, that the artists who make the said works in this city, may not expose the said works to sale in any place but their own shops under the pain aforesaid, except on the day of Wednesday at S. Paolo, and on Saturday at S. Marco, under the pain aforesaid. Signed by the Provedetori del Commune and by Giustizieri Vecchi."

From this decree, we learn beyond question, that the art of reproducing from paintings had been carried on extensively in Venice for some time, and was suffering from foreign competition, and Heineken, in his *Idée Générale*, says, "qui sans doute étoient des Allemands." There is, however, absolutely nothing on which to support this contention, as we shall presently see; and

Zani[1] points out that the word "foreigners" related to all painters and wood engravers who were not incorporated within the city, and included those practising these arts within the limits of the Republic, but outside Venice itself, quite as much as those of alien nationality. We are, however, still befogged about the origin of an art that had evidently attained considerable proportions, and which was inextricably mixed with the production of playing cards, for we may fairly assume that this labour was not entirely undertaken by hand.

I do not wish to wander off in side issues, but I may say here, that Breikopf urges that wood engravings of saints, etc., preceded the use of wood blocks for the manufacture of playing cards,[2] whose introduction into Europe is not assured until 1400. The story about Edward I. playing the game of The Four Kings with cards, in 1277, may be dismissed, for this Oriental pastime is the parent of the modern game of draughts, and has nothing to do with cards. Whence

[1] *Materiali*, p. 77.

[2] *See* Jansen, *Essai sur l'Origine de la Gravure*, vol. i. p. 104.

then did the Venetians derive the art of engraving and printing playing cards, and more ambitious pictures that were the ancient ikons? From the Cunios? Ottley says "no," and urges that "the most reasonable conclusion appears to be that the Venetians acquired the art of wood engraving at a very early period of their intercourse with the people of Tartary, Thibet and China, and that they practised it, among other arts which they had learned from their Eastern friends, as a means of beneficial traffic with the continent of Europe; and that, in course of time, the artists of Germany and other parts found out their secret and practised it themselves."[1] He suggests that the Cunios were inspired by the Venetians, and advances the strange theory that the Eastern peoples must have been acquainted with engraving because Marco Polo makes no mention of it! If, he contends, the art had been new or strange to the Venetians, or to the peoples among whom he travelled, Marco Polo would have said so; an argument which does not appear to me to be convincing. Far more to the point is Ottley's

[1] *History of Engraving*, vol. i. p. 59.

surmise that the earlier engravings were in outline only, roughly daubed with colour, and were sold as pictures or cheap paintings, and that the origin is obscured because the art was unsuspected!

An ingenious theory is put forward by Woodberry, attributing the origin of engraving direct to the goldsmiths, and ignoring its probable evolution from block prints. He says—

"They (the goldsmiths) were the only persons who had by them all the means for taking an impression—the engraved metal plate, iron tools, burnishers for rubbing off a proof, blackened oil, and paper which they used for tracing their designs; they would, too, have been aided in their art merely as goldsmiths, could they have tested their engraving from time to time by taking an impression from it in its various stages. It is not unlikely, therefore, that the art of taking impressions from engraved work was found out, or at least was first extensively applied in their workshops, where it could hardly have failed to be discovered ultimately, as paper came into use more generally for more various purposes. If this were the case, metal engraving preceded wood engraving, but only by a brief space of time."[1]

He supports his contention, which seems

[1] *History of Wood Engraving*, p. 17.

to be shared by Willshire, by allusion to the fact that dotted line prints were known in 1450, and that some have the inscriptions and figures reversed, and were, evidently, not intended to be used for printing. There is much in what he says, and we have already seen that engraving on metal was first adopted by the Hebrews under the Mosaic Dispensation ; but as we have to do with prints from engravings, rather than with engravings themselves, the admission which he makes does not strengthen his contention.

CHRIST BEFORE HEROD.
(Probable date 1480).

CHAPTER II

MORE CLAIMS CONSIDERED

WHILE, as we have seen, one writer of repute endeavours to give credit to the Venetians for the introduction of the art of engraving into Europe, Heineken as stoutly upholds the claims of Germany, and, singularly enough, pursues a similar line of argument to that adopted by Ottley with regard to Marco Polo. With a complacency which excites alike envy and admiring wonder, he argues that, "our total ignorance respecting the first engravers in wood is also a great argument for Germany. For if that art had been invented in any other country, the ancient writers of that country would not have failed to receive it." As if this surmise settled the matter for good and all, he further placidly observes that, "those who seek for it (*i.e.*, the origin of engraving) out of Germany will lose their labour." This very bold assertion does not at all discon-

cert me, since Heineken is often marvellously illogical. Thus in another part of the *Idée Générale* he maintains that it is *proved* that playing cards were in use in Germany before 1376, because at that date they were known to be employed in France! No doubt it is pleasing to self-love and to legitimate national pride to imagine that all that is best emanates from the country to which we each belong, but art knows no country and has no frontiers to defend; it is universal, cosmopolitan, the embodiment of freedom, and argument that would place it within restricted areas for the sake of fictitious patriotism is about as foolish as it is worthless.

Giorgio Vasari, in his *Lives of Painters*, claims that the invention of engraving in Europe is due to one Maso Finigueria, a Florentine, who engraved plates of brass and took off impressions with moist paper and a rolling-pin, and suggests that he was followed by Baccio Baldini, a goldsmith of Antwerp, who engraved The Wise and Foolish Virgins, The Crucifix that Gerado copied, the extremely rare Assumption of the B.V.M., and The Temptations of St Anthony which Michel

Angelo insisted upon washing. I am quite ready, as lawyers say, to admit the rolling-pin, the moist paper and other accessories of Maso Finigueria, but it is not contended by his sponsor that he flourished before 1460. Now the illustration, "Christ appearing before Herod," is from an engraving which is supposed to date from 1380, and was certainly executed prior to 1400; it is, therefore, unnecessary to pursue this Italian claim further. Nor would any useful purpose be served by considering too closely the assertions of Meerman[1] that Lawrence Coster or Laurent Janzoon of Haarlem was the inventor of the art of engraving as well as of printing from movable types. This worthy—whose very existence is far from certain—is credited by those who seek to obtain the honour of the discovery of engraving for the Dutch, with having printed the first edition of the *Speculum Humane Salvationis* in Dutch, the *Figuræ typicæ Veteris atque Novi Testamenti* or *Biblia Pauperum*, the *Historia Sen Providentia Virginis Mariæ ex Cantico Canticorum*, the *Ars Moriendi* and the *Hostoria S. Jonnis*

[1] Meerman, *Origines Typographica, Hagæ Comite*, 1765.

Evangeliste Ejusque Visiones Apocalypticæ. The supporters of this strange story have the great fault of being too emphatic and too precise. Thus Seiz is good enough to date these works in the following order :— *Biblia Pauperum* 1432, *Cantico Canticorum* 1433, *Apocalypse* 1434, and the *Speculum* in 1439. I am unable to find the slightest evidence which justifies these dates, but even if I had been able to do so, they about disprove the theory that Coster was the inventor of engraving. It is noted in the *Idée Générale* that a copy of the *Speculum* belonging to the city of Haarlem had at the commencement *Ex Officina Laurentii Jonnis Costeri, Anno* 1440, but the inscription was admittedly modern, and by consequence of no value. Jackson, moreover, points out that the text of the *Speculum* in the first edition was printed from metal types, and regards it in the highest degree improbable that it was produced before 1472 ;[1] and a supposed find of a note written by Pope Martin V., who reigned 1417-1431, in a copy of the *Apocalypse* does not rest upon trustworthy evidence. With every deference

[1] *Treatise of Wood Engraving*, p. 106.

to the opinions of Meerman and Sotheby,[1] I am inclined to think with Renouvier that the Coster stories are "a group of legends about the cradle of modern art, like those recounted of ancient art, the history of Craton, of Saurias, or of the daughter of Dibutades, who invented design by tracing on a wall the silhouette of her lover."[2] Certain it is that the tales of Coster would be received with considerable indifference were it not for the fact of the claim made by Meerman that it was he who was the inventor of engraving in Europe. The marvel to me is how anyone could have been found willing to credit such a statement even for an instant, since the dates alleged by its advocates negative its possibility. Admitting that Lawrence Coster lived and produced the *Speculum* in 1440, how is he author of an art which was known in Europe in 1285? When this is explained, the Dutch claims will be worthy of consideration, and not before.

[1] *Principia Typographia*, 1858, vol. i. p. 179.

[2] *Histoire de l'Origine et des Progrès de la Gravure dans les Pays-Bas et en Allemagne, jusqu'a la fin du quinzième Siècle*, 1860.

As regards the art itself, it is a matter of small moment who was the first engraver, just as it is a subject of indifference from what country he sprang; but for the curious there is an intense fascination in a question which is fenced round with obstacles, many of which have been created by rank carelessness. Take, for instance, the case of Mr Horn, quoted by Dr Dibdin in his *Bibliotheca Spenceriana*. He tells us that Mr Horn, "a gentleman long and well known for his familiar acquaintance with ancient books printed abroad," was in possession of a copy of the *Biblia Pauperum*, the *Ars Moriendi* and the *Apocalypse* bound in one volume, upon the cover of which was stamped "Hic Liber Relegatus fuit per Plebanum Ecclesiae—Anno Domini 142(8)." The last figure is uncertain, because Mr Horn had broken up the volume and parted with the contents, and, presumably, destroyed the cover, and had to trust to memory alone; but although not certain about the figure 8, he was positive that the date was before 1430. Upon the strength of this, Dr Dibdin dates the *Ars Memorandi Notabilis per*

Figuras in the Spencer Collection as before 1430, because it is apparently earlier than the *Biblia Pauperum*, and says that "the reader will not consider his conclusion a precipitate or unguarded one." But that is precisely what I do consider it to be. Once we allow the special qualifications of Mr Horn as a judge of books and prints, upon which Dr Dibdin insists, we cannot fail to ask how he, an expert, came to break up so valuable a volume, and to destroy evidence of date which he must have known to have been above price? In their precious cover the three books would have formed, as it were, evidence of incalculable worth, and their possessor would have been the envied of the Art world; without it they became of no greater value than the twenty-eight copies scattered about the globe, and not so valuable as the copy held by Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. It is incredible that such a thing should have occurred, because Mr Horn was an authority on the subject, and could not have committed so great a crime against Art unless he did so wilfully, if indeed he ever did it at all. Here, then,

we have one of the greatest obstacles presented, with which the inquirer has to contend. If we accept the evidence of Mr Horn, and give credence to his treacherous memory, we become able at once to fix with considerable approach to accuracy the date at which the earliest block books were printed; but if we do not place reliance on his statements, we must continue to grope on until, perchance, we see light. I must say I have no faith in evidence of such nature; and though quite willing to believe that the *Biblia Pauperum*, the *Ars Moriendi* and the *Apocalypse* were published prior to 1430, that the worthy curate bound them, and that the *Ars Memorandi* was of still earlier date than they, I do so because of the evidences of antiquity which they bear, and not at all because I rely upon the recollection of Mr Horn.

It seems, indeed, as if in this matter of engraving, and its introduction into Europe, we are destined to continue to grope for a more or less extended period, and yet I am inclined to think that when public opinion is aroused in the matter, and others than students and collectors take

interest in the subject, that a flood of light will delight us with its radiance. There are few old houses, even among the middle classes, where one will not find old prints of more or less value, and fewer still where one will not discover old books stored away as things of no worth. As time goes on, their possessors will awaken to the fact that what they hold may constitute a link in a broken chain, and experts will be granted the privilege of connecting the various parts of evidence which shall repair the present breakage. Of course the wish is largely father to the thought in this case, although I firmly believe that hundreds of unsuspected treasures are packed away in the British Isles alone; yet it is unsatisfactory to traverse so much ground and have to arrive at so many negative conclusions. For the present, there is no choice but to pass on and possess our souls in patience.

CHAPTER III

BLOCK BOOKS

ALTHOUGH the origin of block books is far less obscure than other matters connected with the History of Engraving, controversy has raged also round this point, and such a variety of opinions have been expressed, that it is not easy to trace a firm pathway over the intellectual quagmire. Supposing we were to admit Du Halde's claim for the Chinese, that would in no way solve the difficulty of deciding how, when and where block printing, if I may use that term, was introduced into Europe. The statement by Weigel, of Leipzig, in his *History of Block Printing before Albrecht Dürer*, that block printing, on silk, was done in Europe during the twelfth century, requires further confirmation, and I am compelled to think that the first real impetus given to the art was occasioned by the pronouncement of Pope Gregory the Great,

FROM THE ARS MEMORANDI.

that, "what writing is to those who read, that a picture is to those who have only eyes; because, however ignorant they are, they see their duty in a picture, and then, although they have not learned their letters, they read; wherefore, for the people especially, painting stands in place of literature." This eminently common-sense and authoritative utterance has probably much to do with the matter, as I shall presently show, for it must not be forgotten that we owe much that is fine in Art as well as in letters to the Ecclesiastics, who only required a stimulus to help them to greater efforts.

Before I proceed to give my own views, I may briefly allude to a controversy about block books, which sprang up around the celebrated St Christopher in the Althorp Collection, which bears date 1423. The St Christopher, which is the earliest known *dated* print, was discovered by Heineken, who shall tell the story himself. He says—"I found in the Chartreuse at Buxheim, near Memmingen, one of the most ancient convents in Germany, a print of St Christopher carrying the infant Jesus across the

sea. Opposite to him is a hermit holding up his lantern to give him light, and behind is a peasant, seen in a back view, carrying a sack and climbing a steep mountain. This piece is of folio size, and coloured in the manner of our playing cards. At the foot of it is this inscription—

'Christoferi faciem die quacunque tueris
Illa mempe die morte ma la non morieris.
Millesimo CCCC° ii tercio.'"

"At least we know from this piece, with certainty, that the figures of saints, and also letters, were engraved in 1423. Nor can any fraud be suspected in this instance. The print is pasted within the cover of an old book of the fifteenth century. . . . Some one of the ancient monks of the convent, perhaps, desired to preserve it, and at that time no one troubled himself about the antiquity of engraving, or disputed upon the subject." [1]

This remarkable print, together with an equally remarkable Annunciation, is pasted inside the cover of *Laus Virginius*, a Latin MS., dated 1417, the property of Earl

[1] *Idée Générale*, p. 250.

Spencer. It is reproduced—in colour and plain—by Ottley, and presents points of exceptional interest. The features of the infant Christ and St Christopher are drawn by a master-hand, and the draping is excellent, but the extremities are ill designed, and the details are singularly mean. The miniature mill, the rabbit emerging from its hole, and the hermit's hut, suggest an unpractised hand ; but the colouring evinces great care, and has none of the hasty daubing so characteristic of early religious prints. The Annunciation, which occupies the back cover, is even more beautiful, and far more perfect in detail. The angel Gabriel is represented with wings spotted like the peacock ; above, descending on rays, is the sacred dove, and the face and the draping of the Virgin is all that can be desired. But although found at Buxheim, both are, in my opinion, beyond dispute Venetian in expression and execution. There is not a touch that suggests German origin, but all the beauty that belonged to the best work of the Venetian School is present. I do not believe that anyone looking at the soft curved lines and grace of pose can imagine for an

instant that either possess one indication of German execution. Each of these prints is printed in black ink from a press. On the other hand, the St Bridget—also the property of Earl Spencer—is a fourteenth or fifteenth century work, produced by rubbing, and is Low Country or German in its origin. In this case the figure is masterly, and the draping is good, but the perspective is dreadful, and the hasty colouring spoils the appearance of what is excellent. The three works are typical of two distinct schools of thought and design, but in many respects they silence criticism. With respect to the St Christopher, Mr Henry F. Holt, in 1868,[1] advances the theory that as this production is far in advance of block books, these must be anterior in date to it. The statement of superiority as regards some of the block books is quite open to question, but I leave that for a time and pass to his arguments. He laid stress upon the fact that the announcement of the date led to the immediate discovery of another St Christopher acquired by the Bibliotheque Royale de Paris, which, he says, turned out to be a

[1] *Notes and Queries*, 19th September 1868.

forgery, produced by Von Mürr; to the St Sebastian, 1437; St Etienne, 1437; a Calvary, 1443; to the engraving of 1418, in the Royal Library of Brussels, and to yet another St Christopher at Frankfort, all of which were spurious. His argument was that printing preceded engraving, and that no copy of this *Biblia Pauperum* existed prior to 1485!

This reasoning, of course, leads up to the argument he wished to have believed, that Albrecht Dürer was responsible for the most famous block books, notwithstanding the fact that the *Ars Moriendi* is believed to have seen the light in 1450; the *Speculum Humanæ Salvationis* and the *Defensorium* in 1470, while Dürer was born in 1471, and was not apprenticed to Michael Wohlgemuth until 1486.

To assume further that the artist of the *Biblia Pauperum* was responsible also for the *Cantico*, is to accept the wildly improbable. It is possible to admit that Dürer was "the most accomplished formschneider then in existence," but not to allow that he could exercise his art before he was born.

It would be interesting to know, if, as

Mr Holt said, the figures 1423 on the St Christopher do not refer to the date of the engraving to which they do refer. Mr Henry Noel Humphreys suggests in his *History of the Art of Printing*, that it is not an original impression, because of the ink employed, but it is difficult to believe that so famous an engraving should have deceived the experts of the world as to the matter of state, and this may well pass.

In his *Curiosities of Literature*, Disraeli brings us a little nearer the truth with his recital of the origin of the *Biblia Sacra*, or Mazarine Bible, by Gutenburg of Mayence, 1454-5. He says—"A considerable number of copies of the Bible were printed to imitate MSS., and the sale of them in Paris entrusted to Fust (or Faustus) as MSS. Consequent on his selling them at sixty crowns per copy, whilst the other scribes demanded five hundred, universal astonishment was created, and still more when he produced copies as fast as they were wanted and even lowered his price. The uniformity of the copies increased the wonder." Faustus was accused of being in league with the devil, and to save himself from extreme discomfort he

explained how the sheets were produced by rubbing from wood blocks, and received eulogy and fame in place of preliminary torture and fagots. The story is very old and may not be correct in every particular, but it is a good one, and not improbable.

For my own part, I am more inclined to look to the Netherlands for the origin of block books in Europe, and if I am in error, I err in right good company. In his *Histoire de la Peinture en Flandre*, Michiel recounts how on fast days the Lazarists, who devoted themselves to nursing the poor, and other religious Orders, carried through the streets ornamented wax candles, and distributed to the children "Helgen," and wood engravings, illuminated with brilliant colours, and representing sacred subjects. At this time Les Frères de la Vie Commune, whose chief duties were to copy MSS. and disseminate scripture knowledge by means of books, had a retreat to Groenendael, and workshops at Brussels and Louvain, and Henri van der Bogaerde (Pomerius), author of the *Spirituale Pomerium*, was canon and prior of the Order. The well-known painter, Dierick Bouts, went

into retreat at Groenendael in 1440, and Renouvier in his *Origine*, Berjeau in his preface to the reproduction of the *Speculum*, and Harzen in *Archiv. für die Zeichnenden Künste*, press the claims of the brethren to be the pioneers of block printing, and the balance of probability is in favour of their assumption.

The *Ars Memorandi*, one of the most ancient block books, has thirty leaves impressed on one side only with MS. notes, and the copy in the British Museum is believed to be the second edition, and the work, probably, of a Greek artist. I do not find it easy to agree with the poor opinion passed by Ottley upon this book. He classes it as belonging to the inferior school, and holds that whether it was executed in Germany or elsewhere, it was probably the rude manufacture of ordinary card-makers. Personally, I do not think the internal evidence favours this view; not that the *Ars Memorandi* can compare with even either the *Speculum Humanæ Salvationis* or the *Cantico Canticorum*, but because the intelligence of design and the elaborate combination of reference would seem rather to point out that

a deep thinker, even if an inexpert artist, was responsible for its conception and production.

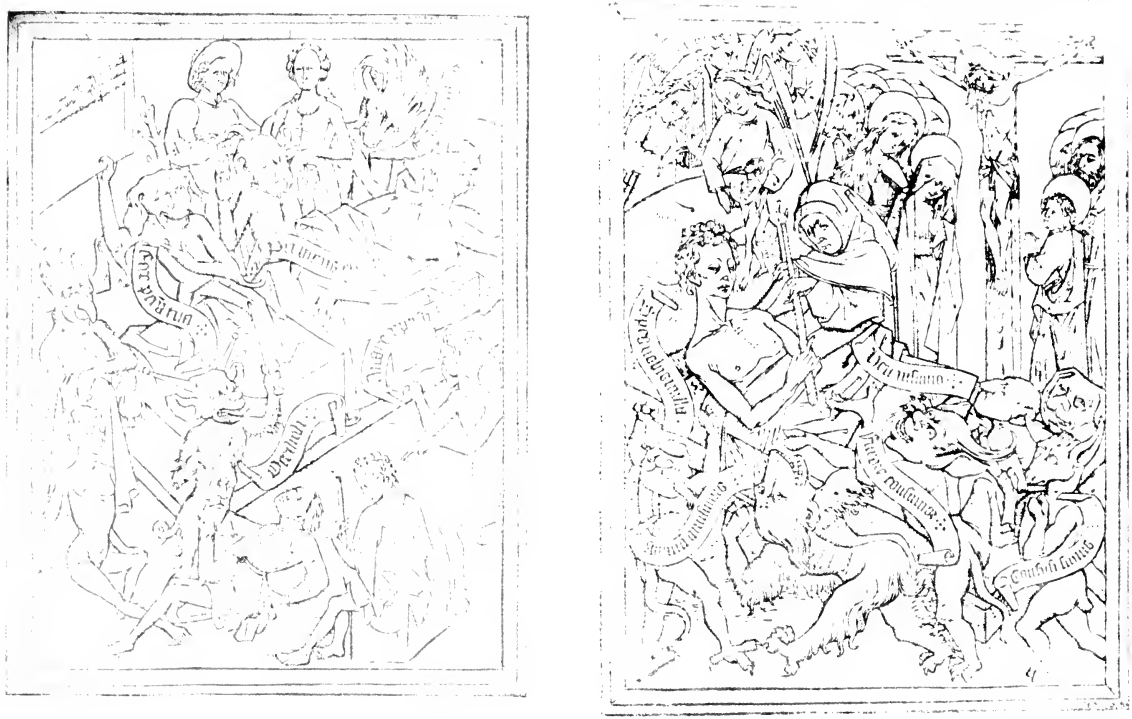
We now come to a work which is superior to the *Ars Memorandi* in every way, namely, the *Ars Moriendi*, or the *Art of Dying*, attributed by Duchesne to the Master of 1446,[1] and which is believed to have been produced in 1450. It will be remembered that Mr Horn professed to have had a copy of date prior to 1430; but, greatly as I would like to believe this, I am compelled to abide by the later period, because only slender probability supports the earlier. The Master of 1446 or E. S. is ranked as the first of the systematically fine workers of the Northern School of Engraving. He has been claimed to have worked in the Pays Bas, the Lower Rhine, and Upper Germany, in Switzerland, Suabia, Lorraine and Strasburg, and has been called indifferently Edgidius Strechlin or Strechin, Englebrechtzen, Erhard Schœn or Schön, and E. Stern. This matter has been argued by Partsch, Passavant, Nagler, Sotzmann and Willshire.

A unique and complete copy of the *Ars*

[1] *Voyage d'un Iconophile*, p. 364.

Moriendi was acquired by the trustees of the British Museum at the Weigel sale in 1872, for upwards of £1000, and this was believed by Weigel to be a first edition. It consists of twelve separate sheets, forming twenty-four pages, each leaf of which is printed on the inner side only; the impression being taken in pale brown ink by rubbing. Two marked peculiarities are noticeable. On folio 13 there is a sign like to the letter Z, which is the only appreciable signature occurring in the volume, and in the text of folios 14, 16, 18 and 24, the letter "u" is written "u." A copy of the *Ars Moriendi* passed at the Yemeniz sale, in 1867, for £382, and the *Editio Princeps*, belonging to the Corser Library, realised £415 in 1868.

The beautiful pages from the *Ars Moriendi*, which, by kind permission of the Director of the British Museum, I have reproduced from the original copy, tell their own tale. In the first, the gaze of the dead man has been fixed to the last upon the presentment of our Crucified Lord. A priest places in his hand the sacred taper; angels are depicted lifting his soul to paradise, and expectant demons are fleeing, howling with rage and mortifica-



FROM THE ARS MORIENDI.

tion. The reverse is shown in the companion picture, where a veritable devil's dance of death is taking place around the couch whereon lies the mortal remains of a lost soul.

Another important block book, believed to have been published in 1470, or the year before Albrecht Dürer was born, is the *Defensorium*, which consists of sixteen leaves, printed on one side only, the first two leaves being divided into two columns, containing representations of St Ambrose, St Augustine, St Jerome, and Pope Gregory the Great. Some slight clue to the authorship is obtained by the initials F. W. in col. 20, which are believed to indicate the name of Friedrich Walther of Nördlingen, an engraver of some repute, while the date is given thus 147°. It would be pleasing, indeed, if anyone could point with certainty to the producers of these volumes, but one thing appears to be certain, and that is, that Dürer did not do so.

Better known, perhaps, than the *Defensorium* is the *Speculum Humanæ Salvationis*, a rare volume, supposed to date from 1470, and which consists of sixty-three leaves,

printed on the rectos only, partly from wooden blocks and partly from movable types. A portrait of L. Coster has been added to the flyleaf, but this, to me, appears no more remarkable than do the occasional movable types, since it is simple and usual for a wood engraver to repair an error by cutting out the blemish, be it a letter or otherwise, and to insert a re-engraved wedge rather than to re-cut the whole block. The British Museum copy lacks plate XV., but even Lord Spencer's copy, which at the Morly sale was sold for 300 guineas, has the last two plates imperfect. This copy is uncoloured.

Another beautiful block book, which has occasioned a wonderful diversity of opinion among experts, is the *Historia Sen Providentia Virginis Mariæ, ex Cantico Canticorum,* being the history or prefiguration of the Blessed Virgin Mary from the Song of Songs, a small folio of sixteen leaves, printed on one side only, in dark brown ink, by means of friction, and which has two subjects to each page. The pages are interspersed with texts and scrolls, which caused Heineken to call it "the most Gothic of all the block

books," an opinion which I, for one, do not share. In his *Idée Générale*, Heineken suggests that there were two editions, from which Jackson (Chatto) entirely dissents, since the designs are the same; and Ottley puts forward the amusing contention that the engravers must have been learned men who were well acquainted with Latin, or they could not have produced the *Cantico*! This reasoning is too feeble to demand reply, since an expert engraver could as easily engrave Latin words as those in any other language, in the same way that a good compositor can set type, even though he be unacquainted with the meaning that the sentences convey. According to Heineken, the Haarlem copy has an inscription at the top of the first cut—"en langue Flamande, on plutôt en Plat Alemand."[1] To my mind the prefix so often quoted—"This is the prefiguration of Mary the Mother of God, and is in Latin named the Canticles," appears to be a clumsy attempt to bolster up the claims of Coster, since the earliest block books were without titles.

Dr Dibdin, in the *Bibliotheca Spenceriana*,

[1] *Inquiry*, p. 140.

says that the work was "the production of some metallic substance and not struck off from wooden blocks," [1] where I think he was wrong; but he is good enough to add that "it is, upon the whole, very greatly superior to the generality of books of this description." Jackson opines that the *Cantico* was the production of an artist residing either in Suabia or Alsace,[2] and points to the striking similarity of the work of Martin Schön, who died in 1486, to that appearing in the volume. Heineken and Von Mürr concur in a sense, but each suggests that while Schön copied from the *Cantico*, the original artist copied from German sculptures in the churches of the fatherland. I do not think that the armorial bearings which appear on the shields are much help in determining origin; for while some undoubtedly are German, others are difficult to locate, and there was not such cohesion among the differing States as should suggest that the arms were grouped as they are for patriotic reasons. Like the *Biblia Pauperum* and the *Speculum Humanæ Salvationis*, the *Cantico Canticorum* was pub-

[1] *Bibliotheca Spenceriana*, vol. i. p. 36.

[2] *Treatise*, p. 74.

lished without the name of artist, engraver, publisher, printer, place or date, and though we may surmise the time of issue, and speculate upon the probable place of production, which seems likely to have been situate in Germany, still no one can speak with certainty however much they may long to do so.

While dealing with these important books, I can hardly do better than quote an excellent extract from *Le Bibliomane*, of July 1861, which has direct bearing upon the subject. Writing in relation to a Book of Hours, it is there stated—

"The non-illuminated prints afford proof, if it were necessary, that all the miniatures of similar works are superimposed on woodcuts of simple outline. The illuminator has preserved the principal contours without servilely following the work of the engraver. It clearly results from this application in miniature to engraving in simple outline that the *Livres Xylographiques* were, without exception, intended to pass through the hands of the illuminator on emerging from those of the printer, and that such copies as remain to us disfigured by flat tints were so prepared simply to receive the bright and brilliant colours entitling them to a place beside the richest manuscripts. The *Figures du Vieil Testament et du Nouvel*, printed

by Verard, *circa* 1500, in folio, upon vellum, and of which the British Museum possesses the only known copy, formerly in the library of Henry VII., belongs to the most splendid examples of this illumination of engravings in which the painter perfectionates, according to his taste, the almost formless work of the engraver."

1481

THE INFANT CHRIST AND THE FLOWER.
("E. S." the Master of 1466).

CHAPTER IV

EARLY MASTERS: "E.S." AND ALBRECHT DURER

THERE is a great temptation to linger longer among the block books which give so much pleasure and occasion so much speculation, yet it is necessary to pass on if one would attempt, however briefly, to grapple with the large subject of the History of Engraving; and one's thoughts naturally turn to the earliest engravings of which we possess authentic record. For a long time it was supposed that the Master of 1466, or "E.S.," the suggested author of the *Ars Moriendi*, was the earliest known engraver, but we have since recognised the unknown Master of 1446, the engraver of a very beautiful Passion; the Master of 1451, whose dated work, The Immaculata, is fully described by Weigel; the Master of 1457, examples of whose work are to be found in the British Museum and at Dantzig, and the Master of 1464, or the "Master of the Banderoles."

This latter title was given to him because of his habit of introducing scrolls into his compositions, and he was also, at times, called the "Master of the Feathered Flesh," because of the peculiar strokes to which he was addicted, and which gave an appearance somewhat similar to feathers. Unfortunately, we know practically nothing of the personality of these Masters, and speculation about them still reigns supreme. I cannot, however, pass a rather amusing criticism without comment. Alluding to the undoubted fact that the Master of 1464 was a man of extensive knowledge, Sotzmann contends, and Willshire agrees, that he was a monk, and associates him with the Frères de la Vie Commune; whereupon Passavant opposed, urging that the licentious details of some of his pieces forbid this theory, unless they were engraved before he professed religion! Such an argument reads well at the present day; and yet it seems incredible that an opinion of the kind should be held by anyone possessing a knowledge of mediæval art. In the first place, a monk was not necessarily a priest; in the second, I could point to places, even in this country, where exquisite

work, as far as art goes, and admittedly done by brethren of monastic Orders, is religiously concealed from general view because of the licentiousness of detail. I do not think, therefore, that Passavant's contention is worth serious consideration, while there are many reasons why Sotzmann's view should be accepted. The Master of 1466 has, however, a more defined position than any of the foregoing, even if his identity is obscure, and he is immensely superior in excellence of technique. Passavant wrote of him :—

"In the management of the burin he still shews considerable analogy with the archaic method of the Master of 1464, but his hatchings in the flesh are more regular and delicate, and in the manner of treating the shadows of his draperies he widely differs from him. His drawing—which is delicate in the contours—and style of composition incline to the opinion that he was a pupil of the school of Van Eyck; and this seems the more probable as we note that the chief motive in one of his pieces representing the Sibyl with the Emperor Augustus, is borrowed from a picture by Roger van der Weyden the Elder. The composition of the Trinity is likewise treated in the style of the same school. Nevertheless, he has some peculiarities of drawing which depart from this style, which are to be seen

particularly in such prints as bear his mark, and in which we find the nose on his faces of women and young people to be long, thin, and slightly rounded at the base. As to his management of the burin, it does not in the least resemble that in the much more developed technic of the Netherlands engraver, known as the Master of 1480."[1]

Ottley makes particular mention of his hatchings in masses of shadow, which are laid so closely together "as often to produce the strength required without the necessity of crossing them by other strokes, and, although he sometimes adopts cross-hatching, he seldom or never permits them to cross the former range of strokes rectangularly." Commenting upon the beauty of technique in many pieces, Willshire waxes enthusiastic, and maintains that there is "in fact evidence of such surety of procedure and such excellence of result that no one could for a moment suppose that these engravings were tentative specimens in a new process. From inspection of them one feels satisfied that engraving on metal must have been practised for some time before such results could have been produced." That it was practised before is

[1] Passavant, *Le Peintre-Graveur*, vol. ii. p. 33.

now known, and that the Master of 1466 engraved in 1461 is proved by a set of playing cards engraved by him, having the portrait of Charles VII., King of France, who died that year, as King of Shields. Passavant rightly concludes that these cards must have been cut before the demise of that monarch, or the picture of his successor, Louis XI., would have been chosen instead. Again, if as Duchesne believes, the Master of 1466 was responsible for the *Ars Moriendi*, presumably published in 1450, there is nothing surprising at his being accomplished in his art sixteen years later. Ottley says of this Master—

"The engravings of this ancient artist are executed with great delicacy of burin, in a manner peculiarly his own. In his draperies, as well as in the naked parts of his figures, he often employs dots or very short touches of the graver . . . . His style of design nearly resembles that of Israel van Meck (or Meckenen) and Francis van Bocholt: the former of those artists, indeed, copies several of his prints."

As an example of the work of the Master I give one beautiful study, The Infant Christ on a Flower, which is a copy by

Israel van Meckenen. The study represents the infant Christ standing on the centre of an opening tulip or lily, with the inscription, "Ein guot selig jor." Weigel regarded this as a design for a New Year's card of greeting, the opening flower being symbolical of the opening year. It should be noted that the date, 1481, has been written in by some late possessor, and does not represent the time of production. Another well-known example of this Master's work is in the possession of the British Museum, and is called by Willshire, "The Arms of Christ," and by Ottley, "An escutcheon bearing the instruments of the Passion." The escutcheon is surmounted by a helmet encircled with the crown of thorns, the crest being a hand of the Saviour, bearing the impress of the nail. The shield is supported by the Agnus Dei and the symbols of the four Evangelists, and the figures of Christ and of the Madonna are also represented, while half figures, holding scrolls, appear right and left. It is a fine composition, and in days when heraldry was in the ascendant was doubtless regarded, as it was conceived, as an act of reverential homage.

From the works of the Master of 1466 I pass to those of Albrecht Dürer, whose genius, both as a wood engraver, as an engraver on metal, and as a monarch of style, have caused him to be ranked above all his compeers. Willshire describes him as *facile princeps*, "whether the feeling, poetry and romance of his designs, the dexterous management of the burin or the exquisite finish of his engravings be considered. Like Rembrandt he is a master of whom the iconophilist never tires, and of whose works he desires to possess every example he can obtain." Albrecht Dürer, although born in Nuremberg, was descended from a noble Hungarian family, who had fallen upon evil days, whose name originally was Ajtos, and they resided for generations at a village also called Ajtos near Gzula. The name, derived from Aito (a door), signifies the same as the German Thürer, or Dürer, and Albrecht Dürer bore the same arms as his predecessors of Ajtos. His father left the village, and presumably adopted the German spelling of his name, and finally settled as a goldsmith at Nuremberg, marrying Barbara Holper in 1467, of whom Albrecht Dürer was the third

son. He was born 21st May 1471, and he tells us in his own biography that, when he had learned to read and write, his father took him from school and taught him the work of a goldsmith. Painting was, however, his ambition, and his father, yielding to his wishes, bound him apprentice in 1486 to Michel Wohlgemuth, the most famous Master of his day, who not only painted, but carved altarpieces and church furniture, and it is alleged engraved also, though this is doubtful. We see at once the immense advantage which a lad with all the instinct of art ripening in him immediately possessed. From his father he would doubtless learn the art of decorative graving on metal; from Wohlgemuth that of delicate carving in wood, as well as the technique of the painter's art. I am not writing a biography, or I might enlarge on Dürer's career; but the portions that I have quoted appear to me to be necessary in order to give insight into his extraordinary power, whether working in wood or in metal. At the close of his apprenticeship he roamed about the Continent, and after four years' wandering, returned, married, and settled in Nurem-

berg in 1494. About 1504 he produced the magnificent Adam and Eve, The Prodigal Son, and the beautiful series of wood engravings illustrating the Apocalypse. Dürer needs no extravagant laudation to emphasise his work ; it speaks for itself, but some comment of authorities is wise, as helping others, perhaps, to strike a more moderate medium and ensure a truer estimate of his genius. Lübke says of him—"In creative richness of fancy, in extensive power of thought, and in moral energy and earnest striving, Dürer must be called the first of all German Masters, and as regards artistic gifts need fear no comparison with any Master in the world, not even with Raphael and Michael Angelo." Greatly as I admire the work of the Hungarian engraver, I am not prepared to go quite so far ; rather, I think the masterly summary of M. Charles Blanc[1] more aptly fits the situation. He writes—

"Albrecht Dürer had understood how by a variety of methods of work to imitate multiformity in objects ; Lucas Van Leyden had shewn how to preserve ærial perspective ; Marc Antonio had indicated the means by which the suppleness

[1] *Gramaire des Arts du Dessein*, 1867.

of the graving tool should subserve the triumph of the drawing; the pupils of Rubens proceeded to shew in what manner the effects of a painting might be produced, *i.e.*, its coloration by light. Thus the engraver became armed at all points, as in translating the hues of Rubens the most diverse methods of incising the copper had been discovered. Drapery, flesh, hair, landscape, architecture, sculpture, every object in fact which can enter into the composition of a picture, is capable of being characterised with the point of the burin."

THE PRODIGAL SON.
Albrecht Dürer.

CHAPTER V

HANS HOLBEIN THE YOUNGER

NEXT to Albrecht Dürer, the leading master of the Early Northern School is probably Hans Holbein the younger, son of Hans Holbein the elder, the well-known portrait painter of Augsburg, who was Court painter to our King Henry VIII., and whose Dance of Death and Bible Pictures are so well known and so keenly appreciated, that it is almost superfluous to speak of his skill as an engraver or of his ability as an artist. He studied under his father, and was born at Augsburg, somewhere about the year 1500. I give this date vaguely; for whereas Nagler says that he was born in 1499, Bryan makes it 1497, and Willshire 1496, while others state that it was so late in 1499 that practically the birth took place in 1500. The exact date is not important; we know and have his work among us, and one or two years in the child-life of a master

is not an affair that is worthy any great speculation or research. There is little recorded of the early life of Holbein, but we know that, in 1515, he and his brother Ambrosius went to the University of Basle, where young Holbein employed himself by designing title-pages and initial letters for printers at Basle and Zürich. Later on, he took to mural painting, fresco work and portraits, and to the production of sacred paintings, of which the Meyer Madonna and the Solothurn Madonna are among the best known. His connection with England arose through his friendship with Erasmus, whose portrait he painted, and it is to this happy circumstance that we owe the prints in Cranmer's Catechism and the titles of Tyndale's and Coverdale's Bibles.

A first point which naturally strikes the student is, did Holbein engrave the wonderfully beautiful work, which sometimes surpasses that of Dürer, or did he solely design it? And this question is hard to answer, since upon it some of the best authorities are agreed to differ. I certainly cannot agree with the definiteness that characterises some writers on this subject. Thus, Bryan says—

"The greatest of his works of this kind is the Dance of Death, preserved to us in the engraving of Lützelburger." This, in my opinion, is far too sweeping a statement. There is no doubt that Lützelburger did engrave many of Holbein's pictures, yet it is equally certain that many of his compositions were engraved by his own hand. Willshire, speaking of a total of 315 pieces, and perhaps 20 alphabets, says—"For all these the artist, during his residence either in Germany, Switzerland or England, made the drawings, and, in the majority of instances, directly over the blocks." This takes us a step on the road, but leaves the question of the graving, which is exceptionally fine, still undisposed of. Weigel strongly inclines to the view that the blocks were actually engraved by Holbein; Woltmann is in favour of Hans Lützelburger, while Mr Wornum thinks the evidence is not conclusive. It is worth while remembering that two distinct series of these remarkable cuts are believed to exist, and that although "these masterpieces of wood engraving," as Mr Chatto terms them, have been frequently copied, the attempts have never attained the beauty

of the originals. Woltmann holds that Holbein's name in connection with this work was intentionally suppressed, because of its satirical character, its caricature of living persons and the religious movements of the times — a very sensible and practical view to take; but the argument cuts both ways, for if it was necessary to publish the book beneath the shelter of anonymity, the probability is that Holbein was the engraver, and not Lützelburger. At the same time, I think the initials on the Duchess strongly support the claim of the latter artist to the production of that particular block.

Leaving the Holbein controversy for a moment, I come now to his connection with England, which is of infinite interest to those who are especially concerned in the rise and progress of British art. As I have said, it was through Erasmus that Holbein received an invitation from Henry VIII. to visit the British Court, and in the autumn of 1526 he set out from Basle, travelling something after the fashion of Oliver Goldsmith, on foot, and proceeded to Antwerp, *viâ* Frankfort, at which place he met Quentyn

Matsys, who was a friend of Erasmus. He left many tracings of his wanderings at places which he visited, notably at Frankfort, and ultimately arrived in London, where he was received and hospitably entertained by Sir Thomas More. His first work here was to produce portraits of his host and friends, but some eighty-seven portraits in coloured chalks on tinted paper, which are at Windsor, and which were engraved by Bartolozzi, and published by Chamberlaine in 1792, sufficiently testify to his capability for work. Three years later, a fit of home-sickness seized him, and he revisited Basle, only to return to London, where, after a few years, he was created Court painter to King Henry VIII., and became high in favour with that monarch and with the leading families of England, receiving from them a large number of commissions. Prior, however, to receiving the Court appointment, he resided with some German merchants at the Steelyard, in Thames Street, and some portraits in the galleries of Berlin and Brunswick were the outcome of his stay in that locality. His last known work was a portrait of himself,

painted in 1543, in which year he died in London.

Naturally I am less concerned with Holbein the painter than with Holbein the engraver, whose "admirable designs, engraved with incredible delicacy in wood," as Ottley rightly calls them, have excited so much admiration and evoked so much controversy, and I am glad to be able to refer to the very excellent work on this subject by Mr Douce. This gentleman, dealing with The Dance of Death, points out that pictures and carvings of this subject are by no means rare, but are to be found in many churches, including our own cathedral of Salisbury and the church at Hexham. It is clear that Holbein did not invent the subjects he so admirably portrayed, but Mr Douce adds—"Certain it is, however, that Holbein did paint a Death's Dance in its improved state, and likewise more than once." Bishop Burnet, in his travels in Switzerland, speaks of a Dance of Death, painted by Holbein, on the walls of a house where he used to drink, which was then so defaced that little was to be seen except shapes and postures. He then mentions the old Death's Dance

at the Dominican Convent, which he says "was so worn out some time ago that they ordered the best painter they had to lay new colours on it; but this is so ill done that one had rather see the dead shadows of Holbein's pencil (*i.e.*, on the walls of the house) than this coarse work." Mr Douce then goes on to remark—"But it has not only been asserted that Holbein designed, but that he *engraved*, or rather *cut* this Dance of Death on wood. That he practised this art, nay, that he excelled in it, there is reason to believe from some specimens that have been preserved, and which bear on them the unequivocal marks of H.H. and Hans Holbein." Precisely; but Mr Douce at once proceeds to knock down the house which he has built, by suggesting that Holbein might only have intended to convey that he designed the subject but did not cut the blocks. In the same way it can be argued, as has been done by Professor Christ, that the monogram H. on many of Holbein's undoubted designs, stands for Hans Lantensack or Hans Lederer, and not for Hans Lützelburger. Of course, they might do so if either of the two former were

known to have executed such exquisite work, but unfortunately this is not the case. The balance of probability is that Holbein did draw directly on to the wood, and that he and Lützelburger are responsible for the actual cutting.

It is interesting to note that Holbein painted a Dance of Death in fresco upon the walls of the palace at Whitehall, which was destroyed by fire in 1697, and this is proved by a set of etchings by Nieuhoff, entitled "Imagines Mortis, or the Dead Dance of Hans Holbeyn, Painter of King Henry VIII.," which is prefaced by a dedication saying that the author had followed as nearly as possible the originals which were painted "as large as life in fresco on the walls of Whitehall," by Holbein. Sandrart records that when Paul Rubens was at Utrecht in 1627, he placed greatest encomiums upon Holbein's cuts, saying that he had copied them, and advising Sandrart to set the highest value upon them.

The portrait of Bishop Fisher is in black chalk on pink paper, strengthened with pen and ink, and is from the Richardson and Cracherode Collection. The Design

for a Block, from the Mariette and Horace Walpole Collection, is in pen and ink with India ink-wash. Below a plinth are two terminal figures of satyrs; above is an hour-glass, enclosed in a case, of which the doors stand open, and surmounting this is a dial plate, the whole being intended as a working drawing for a clockmaker. Underneath, in the handwriting of Sir Anthony Denny, is inscribed—"Strena facta pro Anthony deny camerario regio quod in initio novi anni 1544 regi dedit," *i.e.*, "New Year's gift, made for Anthony Denny, Chamberlain to the King, and by him given to the King, at the beginning of the New Year, 1544."

John Lydgate, monk of Bury, in his *Dance of Machabree*, taken from the Dance of Death at St Innocents', Paris, writes in his prologue the following, giving the motive of these pictures:—

"O, ye folks, hard-hearted as a stone,
Which to the world have all your advertence,
Little as it should ever lasten in one,
Where is your wit, where is your Providence?
To seen aforne the sodayn violence
Of cruel Death, that be so wise and sage,
Which slayeth, alas! by stroke or pestilence
Both young and old, of low and high parage."

Stowe tells us that the walls of the cloister at the North side of St Paul's Cathedral, which compassed a plot of ground known as Pardon Churchyard, were enriched by the Dance of Machabray, a dance of death, commonly called the "Dance of Paul's," "the like whereof was painted about St Innocents' cloister at Paris;" but this is hardly correct, for the painting at St Paul's had only thirty-five characters, and the other seventy-six. In that admirable work relating to Hollar's engravings after Holbein, it is pointed out that John Lydgate, who translated the metre from the French, not only omitted several characters, but supplied their places with others; so that if the lines he wrote were inscribed under the painting at St Paul's, it must have differed greatly from that at St Innocents' at Paris. The work was done by Lydgate at the expense of Jenken Carpenter, who was the Town Clerk of London in 1430 and executor of Sir Richard Whittington. Lydgate did not profess to give a literal translation of the French, since he writes—

"Out of the French I drough it of intent,
Not word by word, but following in substance,"

and Mr Wharton stated that the task was undertaken by him, at the request of the Chapter of St Paul's, to be inscribed under the painting in the cloister. It is therefore a moot question whether Lydgate or the artist was responsible for the points of difference.

Fragments of a Death's Dance are to be seen yet in Salisbury Cathdral, at Hexham Church, Northumberland, and also at Berlin, Klingenthal, Féchamp, Dresden, Annaberg, Leipzig, Lubeck and Berne. Macaber was a German poet who composed verses relating to the subject which Fabricius thinks are more ancient than the paintings, although the one at Lubeck is supposed to date from 1463. The original "Dance of Macaber," as performed in the churches, has been (Glossar Carpentier) traced back to 1424.

CHAPTER VI

PROGRESS OF WOOD-ENGRAVING IN ENGLAND

TURNING from the Northern School, which found masters in Albrecht Dürer and Hans Holbein the younger, the question naturally arises, What was Great Britain doing in the matter of engraving all this time? We have seen perfection of work—for nothing more beautiful than the Adam and Eve of Dürer, nothing more terribly realistic than the Christus wird au's Kreuz genagelf, of Holbein, ever have been or, to my mind, ever will be produced; but where do we English come in? Truth to tell, we come in very badly. We were too busy in dreams of conquest and of Empire, to pay much attention to the gentle arts, and if the love of the beautiful languished in England, it was probably because learning was regarded as womanish, and only those were considered worthy who were capable of feats of arms. Possibly we have no reason to complain of

¶ And begynneth the tale of the doctour of phiſik

THer was as telleth titus liuius
A knyght that clepid was Virginius
Fulfilled of honour & of worſhipnes
And ſtronge of frendys and of ryches
A doughter had this knyght by his wyf
No children had he mo ſy al his lyf
Fayr was this mayde of excellent beaute
Abouen euery wyght that men myght ſee
For nature hath wrought ſouerayn diligence
Fourmedy her in ſo grete excellence
As though ſhe wolde ſay & I nature
Thus can I fourme and peynte a creature
Whan that me lyſt who can me counterfete
Pigmaleon not though he forge and bete
Or grave or peynte for I dar wel ſeyn

FROM THE CANTERBURY TALES.
Caxton.

this: but for this feeling we should not be, as we are, a masterful and dominant race; yet the fact remains that, alike in Art and Science, we have often woefully lagged behind in achieving results which other people have compassed. It must not, however, be overlooked, that when we have put our hands to the artistic or scientific plough, we have accomplished as greatly as others; our national talent in these directions was only obscured, not lacking, and the exigencies of the times, not the ability of the people, were alone responsible for our shortcomings. This little diversion is my apology for taking matters out of sequence, and harking back to the art of engraving as known in England before Hans Holbein worked among us.

The earliest-known engraving, which is an example of British Art, is a plate of a "Moral Play," formerly in the possession of M. Weigel, of Leipzig, which realised a price of £140 in 1872, and which is now in the British Museum, and this has been facsimiled by Mr Frank C. Price. When, however, we come to the earliest British engravings, produced in number, we have

to fall back upon that most remarkable man, Caxton, who is certainly one of the greatest heroes that the proud county of Kent ever produced. I think that I may be pardoned for saying a few words about Caxton before proceeding to deal with his work. He was born at Hadlow, in the Weald of Kent, as he says, in 1422, and, so far as can be ascertained, was a descendant of former Lords of the Manor. Apparently the family had fallen upon evil days, for Caxton was apprenticed to Robert Large, Mercer, of Old Jewry, a man of substance, who was Lord Mayor of London, 1439-40. Having served his articles, he went, in 1446, to Bruges, to start business on his own account, but he returned in 1453, in order to be admitted to the Livery of the Mercers' Company, the premier Guild of London. Shortly afterwards he was made Governor of the Merchant Adventurers of the Low Countries, and in this capacity he seems to have done good work, and to have acquired a competence. His heart was, all this time, not with commerce, but with art and letters, and in 1473, he published *Le Recueil des Histoires de Troye*, and set himself to learn

the newly-invented art of printing. It is doubtful if Caxton first studied printing at Cologne or at Bruges, but it is known that he was associated with Colard Mansion at Bruges, in 1473. In 1476 he left Bruges, and established himself in the precincts of the Abbey at Westminster, in the house with "the reed pale," or red palings, in the Almonry, where he set up the first printing-press established in England. He printed there some seventy-one books, and dying in 1491, was buried in the church of St Margaret, at Westminster, where a tablet was placed to his memory by the Roxburghe Club, and a stained glass window, with an inscription by Tennyson, was given by the printers and publishers of London, in 1883.

This brief allusion to the personal history of Caxton, which will be familiar to most of my readers, is only by the way ; for the point we have to consider is not what Caxton printed, but what he engraved. So far as we know, the first printed book in England containing woodcuts is the second edition of Caxton's *Game and Playe of the Chesse*, which he translated from Jean de Vignay's version

of J. de Cassoli's *Ludus Scacchorum* and which was published about 1476.

Heineken, in his *Idée Générale*, falls into error, for he quotes the *Golden Legend* as the first book published in England which contained woodcuts. This is not so, for the *Golden Legend* was not issued until 1483; and Jackson is careful to recite that the *Game and Playe of the Chesse* and the *Mirrour of the World* were both antecedent, the former by some seven years. There is a curious entry on the blank leaves at the end of a copy of the first edition, in the possession of the authorities of the British Museum, giving a list of the bannerets and knights made at the battle of "Stooke by syde newerke apon trent, the xvi. day of june, the ii[de] yer of harry vii," *i.e.* 1487. The bannerets were "S. gilbert Talbot, S. john Cheiny, S. willia stoner. Theis iii were made byfore the bataile, and after the bataile were made the same day, Sr john of Arundell, Thomas Cooksey, john forteskew, edmond bedingfield, james blount, ric of Crofte, Geoffrey Stanley, ric delaber, john mortymer, willia troutbeke." The "knyghtes made at the same bataule" follow.

In the *Game and Playe of the Chesse* there are twenty-four impressions, but only sixteen subjects. The pawns are represented as labourers — a smith, clerk, merchant, apothecary, innkeeper, toll-gatherer and courier. Caxton gives the following description of the innkeeper :—

"The sixte pawn which stondeth before the alphyn on the lyfte syde is made in this forme ffor hit is a man that hath the ryght hond stretched out for to calle men, and holdeth in his left honde a loof of breed and a cuppe of wyn, and on his gurdel hangyng a bondel of Keyes, and this resemblith the taverner, hosteelers, and sellars of vytayl. And these ought properly to be sette to fore the alphyn as to fore a judge for these sourdette oft tymes among them contencion, noyse and stryff, which behoveth to be determyned and trayted by the alphyn, which is judge of the Kynge."

Of course the point we have to consider is not the object or the process of production of Caxton's books, but how the engravings, or rather woodcuts, were produced, and where. I am careful upon this point, because Passavant, who starts with the assertion that Caxton was born in 1412,

instead of 1422, says that he was "the first who published in England books ornamented with engravings from *metal*," and adds that the cuts in the *Game and Playe of the Chesse* are from metal blocks. How any one in his sober senses could make such an assertion I cannot conceive, the more so as such statements from authoritative sources are apt to confuse the issue which all students are anxious to make clear. Dr Dibdin, again, in his *Disquisition on the Early State of Engraving and Ornamental Printing in Great Britain*, says that the figures in the *Game of Chesse* and in the *Mirrour of Life* "are, in all probability not the genuine production of this country; and may be traced to books of an earlier period printed abroad." But he does not trace them. He could not, because they are not traceable. He is good enough to say that the cuts for the second edition of the *Canterbury Tales* "may perhaps safely be considered as the genuine invention and execution of a British artist;" then why not the *Game of Chesse* and the *Mirrour*? The cuts are nothing to boast about; they are coarse and crude enough; but I object to the idea which

some people seem to entertain that England owes everything to outside initiative. Jackson strikes a healthy note in my favour. He says—"I am decidedly of opinion that the cuts in the *Game of Chesse* and the *Mirrour of the World* were designed and engraved in this country"; and he adds—"I protest against bibliographers going abegging with woodcuts found in old English books and ascribing them to foreign artists before they have taken the slightest pains to ascertain whether such cuts were executed in England or not." This sturdy protest is just. Compare the coarse work of Caxton's books with the finished productions of the Northern School. They are hard, impressionless, infantile, and why Caxton should have gone to the trouble of importing them is a mystery. Mr Noel Humphreys alleges that the cuts in the *Canterbury Tales* (second edition) have a right to be considered English, because of certain peculiarities of style; but I believe that all the cuts in Caxton's books are English. They show the mark of the novice so strongly that it is incredible that Caxton, fresh from Cologne and

Bruges, should have brought such unfinished work with him, or should have caused it to be sent him. This is not paying a compliment to England; but we have atoned our past artistic crimes, and I am wishful to contend that the first English printer also employed the first English engraver, even if his name be unknown.

When Caxton started at Westminster, he made "begynnynge with small storyes and pamfletes and so to other," and the "other," as all the world knows, was very good indeed. Of his *Mirrour of the World or Thymage of the Same*, he says he translated it from the French at "the request, desire, coste and dispense of the honourable and worshipful man Hugh Bryce, alderman, cytezeyn of London," who intended to present it to Lord Hastings. "Which booke I begun to translate the second day of Janyuer the yere of our Lord Mcccl xxx. And fynyshed the viii day of Marche the same yere and the xxi yere of the reygn of the most crysten kynge King Edward the Fourthe."

The description appended to the cuts is couched in such quaint phraseology that

I need no apology for giving it. Appended to the scheme of creation is the sentence—"Ye ought to know that when our lord God made the world and that he had made all things of nought he had no nede of it." The creation of Eve evokes the following :—"When God formed man he wolde made and create hym like unto hys ymage and semblance to thend that he shold have remembrence of the goodes that he had lente hym and that he myght deserve them alle by ryght and raison ffor he shewede to hym so greate love that above alle other creatures he fourmed hym to his figure and semblance." Of the geometrical subject he says—"The fyfthe is called geomstrye the whiche more anayeleth to astronomye than ony of the vii others ffor by her is compassed and mesured astronomye. Thus is by geomestrye mesured alle things." Of astronomy he writes—"And who knoweth well and understandeth astronomye he can sette reson in alle thinges for our Creatour made alle thynges by reson of his name to every thyng." The eclipse of the sun is thus described—"It happeth sometyme that the sonne leseth his clere-

ness and the lyght in the playn daye for it goth as to declyne and is called in latyn eclipse. This eclipse proceedeth bicause of defaulte of light and it happeth in this manere that when the mone, whiche is under the sonne, cometh right betwene us and the sonne, then in the right lygne it felouth that towards us, the mone taketh and receygneth the lyght of the sonne on heye so that it seemeth to us that it is defaylled."

Two of the cuts from *The Game and Playe of the Chesse*, namely the Apothecary and the Dice Player, are thus described—

"The Fifth pawn that is set before the Queen signifieth the Physician, Spicer, and Apothecary and is formed in the figure of a man: and he is set in the Chair as a Master and holdeth in his right hand a book: and an ample or a box with ointment in his left hand: and at his girdle his instruments of Iron and of Silver, for to make incisions and to search wounds and hurts and to cut apostumes."

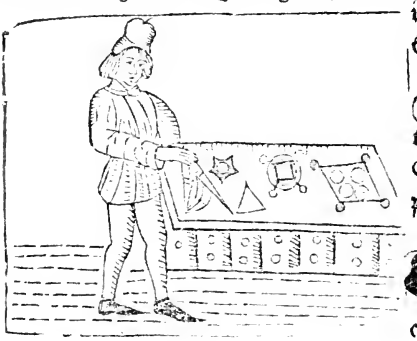
The eighth pawn represents—

The ribalds, players at dice and the messengers

The ribaul des players at dyse & the messageris & answeris ought to be sette before the wolf. for his answer

THE DICE PLAYER.

For Who that wolde dispute vpon suche werkes/hym behoued dispute & knowe many thynges & meche of the glose Who that knewe wel the science of arsmatrique he myght see thordynance of alle thynges/By ordynance was the world made & created/And by ordynance of the souerayn it shal be affe-
cted/



Next followeth the seyence of Geometrye capitulo 4 pi°

The fyfthe is called geometrye the

and courrors (couriers) and ought to be set before the rook which is Vicar of the King, to have men convenable for to run here and there for to enquire and espy the places and cities that might be contrary to the King."

CHAPTER VII

SOME MASTERS OF THE FRENCH AND ITALIAN SCHOOLS

SINGULAR as it may appear, at the very time when Caxton was introducing the art of engraving on wood into England, that art had started on a downward grade, and was rapidly losing its popularity, even in towns and cities where it had been most famous. It was not that engraving itself was less in favour, but that those less gifted than the great ones gone before found that it was easier to obtain delicacy of execution on metal than it was on wood. The French School especially, which later on developed a passion for elaboration till it became a craze that actually obscured the subject, was the greatest sinner on this point; but the Italian followed, and engraving on wood seemed almost doomed, till it fell to the lot of England, in the person of Thomas Bewick, to bring about a glorious

ST. GEORGE AND THE DRAGON.
Benedetto Montagna.

revival, in the later days of the eighteenth century.

There are some masters who must not be omitted before we come to the great discovery of mezzotint, and these are of the French and Italian Schools. Some few years before Caxton died—actually, I believe, in 1485—there was born at Langres a child named Jean Duvet, who was afterwards to make his mark in art, and to be known by the name of the "Master of the Unicorn." I am careful about this master since he has, to my mind, been assailed unjustly, or, perhaps I should say, criticised much more severely than he deserved; and as our national collection is rich in the number of his works, it is open to anyone to judge whether or not I am correct.

Jean Duvet was a goldsmith in the service successively of Francis I. and Henri II. of France. His first known dated print was published in 1520, but it is fairly evident that he had become a skilful artist at a much earlier period. Passavant ascribes to him seventy-five pieces, the most important of which, The God Mars, 1530, Adam and Eve, Moses with the Patriarchs,

St John the Baptist, The Crucifixion, and twenty-four plates descriptive of the Apocalypse, or Apocalypse Figurée—for which he received a royal decree. Out of this collection one might expect to find some one or other sufficiently good to merit praise, but little, if any, is given, and such as is accorded is very half-hearted. Bartsch describes his work as "merely a picturesque assemblage of different lines which, although sufficient to produce the requisite shadows, does not necessitate that subtil attention necessary for executing a clean and careful stroke." The next complaint comes from Duplessis, who says his work "is often too dry and involved. . . . Duvet takes just as much pains with the accessories of his designs as he does with their most important objects, hence there is no focus of interest, but everything is equal, and all is surcharged." Well, neither of them mention his Chriso and the Woman of Samaria, which Willshire mentions with admiration, and Ottley thinks enough of the Annunciation to give space to it; while surely the St Sebastian does not need harsh treatment.

It is a new complaint that a man is too careful, but "any stone suits some folk, so that it be a stone." One of the prints accredited to Duvet, The Poison and the Antidote, was said by Mr Carpenter, formerly Keeper of Prints at the British Museum, to be a genuine Leonardo da Vinci, an opinion which was shared by Stanley, and Passavant quotes Cefare da Sefto as the engraver. Most of his plates were signed Joh. Duvet, or simply Duvet, sometimes only by letters, "I. D."

Duvet died in 1556. His title, the "Master of the Unicorn," was because of his frequent introduction of this animal, which was some subtle allusion to Francis I.

Another French engraver of the period, who deserves more than passing mention, is Jean Etienne de Laulne, who was in Paris, as some say, but more probably in

Orleans, in 1518. He was at first, so Bryan says, an engraver of medals, who received large artistic assistance from Benvenuto Cellini, then resident in Paris, which probably accounts for his Italian style, though it was the fashion to copy that School, both then and for a considerable period afterwards. He was one of the most famous designers of goldsmiths' work, and some half-dozen of his finest plates are in the Louvre. Most of his principal work was done at Strasburg, where he resided the best part of his life with his son. He copied David and Goliath; The Slaughter of the Innocents; and St Felicitas, from the prints of Marc Antonio; The Brazen Serpent, after Cousin, which is one of his largest and best plates; and a great variety of Old Testament and mythological subjects, which were probably the work of his son. Willshire considers his Neptune and Arethusa to be two of his best productions, but I think La Triomphe de Bacchus and Combat d'Hommes et d'Animeaux to be superior. He was great on engraving circular dishes,

reproducing the histories of Moses and of Samson, and his work was peculiar, being a mixture of lines and fine dots akin to stipple. Jean Etienne de Laulne died at Strasburg in 1595, his usual signatures being "S. SF.," or "S. fecit," but he sometimes signed "Stephanis fecit."

The next artist of importance at this period was Jacques Callot, who was born at Nancy in 1593, and died in the same place in 1635. Weird, fantastic, unrestrainable, Callot was the Dante of engravers, one who seemed to revel in the horrible, and who yet was capable of portraying not alone the real, but the beautiful. M. Galichon sums him up so admirably that, although the extract has been reprinted many times, I cannot refrain from giving it. He writes—"From the brain of no other artist did a like legion of monsters, all armed, ever make their exit. One would suppose that Callot must have fitted himself for his vocation by a descent to the Styx; that he had visited in one night the Hell of the Christians, the Gulfs of Tænare, the Court of Pluto, and the Palace of Belzebuth." All this is true, yet the same

brain which designed pictures of demons, exhausting the stock of human ingenuity in their portrayal, which often are revolting in their coarseness of conception, also drew the refined and delicate prints of the Passion, the sets of the Apostles and Saints, and others that are still more exquisite. Where, for instance, is a finer print of the period and School to be found than St Nicholas Preaching at the Entrance to a Wood? or what more refined than Benedicite or Grace? or what better work than the design for a Crucifix?

Again, Callot was a fine character drawer as any that I remember, as his two sets of Italian Beggars sufficiently prove. Strutt says of him—"The fertility of invention, and the vast variety which are found in the works of this excellent artist are very astonishing. One would hardly have supposed it possible to combine so great a number of figures together and vary the attitudes, without forced contact, so that all of them, whether single figures or groups, may be equally distinguished from each other, even in the masses of shadow, especially when we consider that

they are often minute even to admiration."

Callot was as prolific a producer as he was a designer, some 1,500 plates being placed to his credit. He is said to have been the first to make use of hard varnish in etching, but it must not be forgotten that he was less an etcher than an engraver. He did etch when it suited him, for your true artist presses all means into his service; but it is as an engraver alike of the divine and beautiful as of the most fearful and horrible, that Callot will be best remembered.

The masters of the Italian School necessarily occupy a high place in the world of art, for Rome attracted all that was best of the children of the South, and the great artists and teachers found it expedient to remain there. All who are lovers of art for art's sake have reason to be thankful to the successive Pontiffs, who gave such vast opportunities to the greatest painters of the day, and through them to their brethren of the burin. The greatest period in the art history of the Vatican began with Pope Julius II., nephew of Sixtus IV., to whom and to his successor, Leo X., are due the

principal art treasures which adorn the palace of the Vatican. It was Julius II. who gathered to that place that wonderful colony of painters which, commencing with Perugino, and including Bramantino, Ruysch, Peruzzi and Lorenzo Lotto, ended with the immortal master Raphael. The name of this master lifts us at once from the vast regions of art generally, into which one is perilously tempted to stray, into touch with our chief subject, which is engraving; for it must not be overlooked that Raphael himself was by no means unacquainted with that art. I am not one who is disposed to attach too much credit to the assumption that Raphael was responsible for many of the best plates of the Italian School of this period, although it is more than probable that he supervised the production of most and touched up many plates; but to his influence, doubtless, is due that gracefulness of outline and harmony that specially marks the work of the masters of the age.

It came about that at the very time when Albrecht Dürer was in the zenith of his fame, a young artist and engraver, by name Marc Antonio Raimondi, crept into notice,

and gave proof of power which was destined to place him in the front rank among masters of the Italian School. Born in Bologna, according to Passavant, in 1488—but as Willshire alleges in 1480—he was instructed in drawing by Francesco Raibolini, and also studied engraving under a Bologna goldsmith, whose name is unknown. Indeed, a great deal of uncertainty surrounds the personal history of many of the best exponents of the Italian School; but their art remains an imperishable monument to their genius. One thing is certain about Raimondi, better known as Marc Antonio, which is, that in 1510 he proceeded to Rome, and there became one of the trusted workmen under Raphael. Those were not always happy days for artists, notwithstanding the fact that successive Pontiffs, who were not remarkable for blameless lives, devoted their best efforts to revive Art, and to make the palace of the Vatican the envy of the world. In this last point they succeeded, too well for themselves on more than one occasion, but occasionally ideas crept in which were not favourable to the artist. So it came about that Marc

Antonio, who was charged with engraving some questionable pictures, probably, if one may judge by his future work, free from all real blame, was imprisoned for the alleged offence by order of Pope Clement VII. Upon the intercession mainly of Baccio Bandinelli he was released, and in token of gratitude he engraved the painter's celebrated picture of the Martrydom of St Lawrence, and the excellence of his work at once found him favour with the Pope. Not so, however, with Bandinelli, who complained that his conception was changed, and his ideas diverted. It is not a new story. I have known many engravers who, by their skill, have removed blemishes in the work of the painter while retaining the best features of his work, and this, surely, should be a subject of praise rather than blame. The controversy is interesting, because it shows how critics differ. The Pope applauded the engraver, and Bartsch says—"that, accustomed to the graces of Raphael," Raimondi had softened "the outrée manner of Bandinelli." On the other hand, Passavant alleges that "if the pupil of Raphael has bestowed more nobility

and beauty on the form, particularly of the nude, he has done so only at the expense of the energy overruling the whole composition." I take leave to differ from this assertion, and collectors justify my opinion by the high esteem in which his work is held.

There is a point here, which more than one chronicler has noticed, which should not be overlooked by the student and collector, namely, that after Raimondi's death many of his plates were pawned to the Monte de Pieta, and the Cannera at Rome leased these to dealers for a period of one year, with permission to take as many impressions therefrom as they chose. What the results were can well be imagined, but these productions no more represented the finished work of Marc Antonio than a bulrush does a palm-tree. His plates also were frequently retouched by Barlacci, Laseri and others.

It is interesting to read what men of authority say of one of the greatest of Italian masters of the engraver's art. Gilpin speaks of both Marc Antonio and his pupil Agostino Veneziano in one breath,

saying that their engravings of the works of Raphael are celebrated for antiquity, not merit. "Their execution is hard and formal to the last degree, and if their prints give any idea of the works of Raphael, one may wonder how they obtained their reputations." This is rather an involved sentence, although the meaning intended to be conveyed is clear, and this intention is flatly contradicted by Passavant, who writes of Marc Antonio—"The exceptionally high talent of Marc Antonio as a draughtsman shews itself in all its force when he engraves after simple sketches of Raphael not specially prepared for engraving from, since certain parts only were finished, while others were but just indicated. The engraver must have been, therefore, completely penetrated by the manner of the master, to have been enabled to leave, from such sketches, works so perfect as those which we admire in Marc Antonio's prints." Then again we have the testimony of Mr Reid of the British Museum, who says that "Raphael took so much interest in Raimondi's works that he corrected the outlines of some of the subjects on the copper."

Further testimony is given by Willshire, who is a critic of special merit. He says—"Dürer was before him in everything but grace and that Italian feeling for flowing outlines and elegant expression, to which it is scarcely surprising a German did not attain. Dürer was a Shakespeare, a Michael Angelo, a genius, a creator in his art; Marc Antonio was the Virgil and Horace of his time. The one held the wand of an enchanter as well as the burin; the other only the facile crayon of the accomplished artist."

A noteworthy feature about Raimondi is the marvellous way in which he impressed his individuality upon his pupils. So marked was this that Bartsch places his works and those of Agostino Veneziano and Marco da Ravenna in the same catalogue. Out of his 300 odd plates, the Aretino, after Titian, is probably the best, and this, at the Howard sale in 1873, sold for £780. His Adam and Eve, which sold at Sotheby's in 1874 for £495, is doubtless singularly beautiful, but it is doubtful if the like subject of Dürer does not surpass it. Marc Antonio copied extensively from Dürer, not always to the

benefit of the latter; but he shows to advantage in his series of small saints, and his Massacre of the Innocents is one of his finest conceptions.

Stormy days were in store for him. In 1527 the Germans, under Fründesberg, and the Spaniards, under de Bourbon, swept down upon the Holy City, the object being less plunder than destruction. Pope Clement VII. retired with his Court to St Angelo, and the Vatican and all the churches and art treasuries were given over to the destroyers. They showed their aim not by loot, but by malicious and wanton mischief. Every picture, every vessel, vestment or tapestry was hacked in pieces; the painted glass was demolished, such relics as could be found were destroyed, and the goods of all belonging to the palace utterly demolished. The scenes recall the worst abominations of the wildest revolutions; and while da Ravenna lost his life, Marc Antonio lost his all. He fled to Bologna, and there in less than three years he died. What treasures were lost to art by this senseless outrage it is impossible to tell. I am not concerned with the rule or conduct of the popes; I only know that at

that time no city of the world was so rich in all things beautiful as Rome, and wanton destruction can only be recorded with a pang.

Of Agostino di Musi, better known as Agostino Veneziano, I have already spoken, but he was associated with Marco Dente da Ravenna in engraving such works of Raphael as had not been done by Marc Antonio. He produced some 180 pieces, of which I think Ananias Struck Dead to be one of the best. Of Ravenna little personal is known, but his work proves his skill and his worthiness to be a pupil of a great master.

While all the world is indebted to the Pontiffs for the part they played in the encouragement of Art, collectors are most interested in those who reproduced the glories of the masters, and rendered these treasures possible of acquisition by the whole civilised race. Chief honour therefore attaches to Maso Finiguerra, who was the first, and one of the best exponents, of the Art of Engraving in Italy. Of this gifted man, Vasari writes—

"The commencement of the Art of Engraving (*dell' intagliare*) springs from Maso Finiguerra, a

Florentine, about the year of grace 1460, since this artist from all his works, which he engraved on silver, to be afterwards filled up with niello, obtained from them impressions in clay, and having poured liquid sulphur on these they became imprinted and charged with smoke. Whence by means of oil they gave out the same effect as did the silver. And this he did again with damp paper, and with the same tint, exerting pressure gently all over it with a round roller, which made it appear not only as if printed, but as though drawn with the pen."

I am not interested to know if Roger van der Weyden, or Van Eyck, who was at Rome in 1450, inspired Maso Finiguerra, since although priority is claimed for the German School, and prints engraved in intaglio on copperplate in Germany are said to exist since 1422, both Bartsch and Passavant point out that there is no proof of such prints having existed, and that in this instance the wish was father to the thought. Maso Finiguerra initiated a Florentine goldsmith, named Baccio Baldini, in the art of taking an impression on paper from a niello plate, somewhere about 1450, and this artist, in 1465, issued his famous calendar, the idea being the indefinite multi-

plication of prints by the same process as that used in charging silver plates with nigellum. Baldini was born at Florence in 1436, but the date of his death is uncertain. For about ten years Baldini occupied himself in engraving unaided, but after this time he was assisted by a still more famous artist, by name Alessandro Fillipepi Botticelli. This noted man, better known as Sandro Botticelli, was the son of Mariano Fillipepi, and was born at Florence in 1447. He was at first apprenticed to a goldsmith, and studied painting after Fillippo Lippi, and afterwards devoted himself largely to engraving. The suggestion is made by Passavant that Botticelli imitated the Master of 1466, or E. S., and that this suggestion proves that the Germans were prior to the Italians in the Art of Engraving; but it certainly does nothing of the kind, although the inference is sufficiently subtle to be convincing to some minds. Passavant says of Botticelli—

"He engraved much on copper, and his works of this kind are easily recognisable by their superior drawing, particularly of the contours. Another character distinguishing them from the engravings of Baldini is the use of the dry point, particularly

in the obliquely crossed hatchings—a method adopted by the old German masters, and among them by the Master of 1464, or of the Creation. As these hatchings generally disappear after the earlier impressions have been taken, the later copies have frequently a somewhat harsh appearance. Botticelli employed this manner of engraving in his prints of the Prophets and Sibyls, and particularly in his illustrations of Dante."

He immortalised himself during the Pontificate of Sixtus IV. by his beautiful frescoes in the Sistine Chapel, which decorations have caused this small sanctuary to be described as "one of the greatest of the world's treasure-boxes." Botticelli's contributions are The Temptation of Our Lord by Satan; Moses assisting the Daughters of Jethro against the Shepherds of Midian; The Sons of Aaron, Korah, Dathan and Abiram being punished at the Altar they defiled, and some of the figures of the Popes. The remaining frescoes are Moses and Zipporah, once attributed to Signorelli, but now claimed to be the work of Pinturicchio; Moses and the Israelites after the Passage of the Red Sea, by Cosimo Rosselli; Moses giving the Commandments

from the Mount, by Rosselli; Moses and Joshua, also attributed to Signorelli, but probably by Pinturicchio; The Baptism of Christ, attributed to Perugino; The Calling of the Apostles at Gennesareth, by Domenico Ghirlandajo; The Sermon on the Mount and The Last Supper, both by Rosselli; and Christ giving the Keys to St Peter, by Perugino. According to Vasari, Botticelli was given charge of all the artists at work in the Sistine Chapel, but I am not inclined to take this opinion too seriously, for it is well known that the voluptuous colouring of Cosimo Rosselli found greater favour with Sixtus IV. than did the more delicate toning of Botticelli. It is worth noting that the fine background in the fresco of the Punishment of the Sons of Aaron has been attributed to Filippino Lippi, but the only reason alleged for this is its extreme beauty. I cannot recognise this as any valid reason for refusing the honours of its composition to Botticelli, for the whole of this fresco is admirable in its mingled force and dignity, passion and terror, and the man who pictured these was surely capable of drawing the back-

ground. Equally powerful is the fresco of Moses and the Daughters of Jethro, a wonderful study, chiefly in grey and white, but it is too full of varied incident to rank as an effective piece of work of the first order, although the ability of the artist is unquestionable.

Perhaps one of the most admired of Botticelli's works is his Adoration of the Magi, the three kings being portraits of members of the princely family of Medici, who gave great support to the artist and engraver. The first king is represented by Cosimo de' Medici, the second by Giuliano de' Medici, father of Pope Clement VII., and the third by Giovanni de' Medici, son of Cosimo. Of this picture Vasari writes—"It is a most admirable work for colouring, design and composition; and so beautifully finished, that even in these days, every artist is astonished at it."

Botticelli has been credited with writing a commentary upon Dante, but although he certainly designed and engraved plates for the *Inferno*, there seems some doubt about his written essay. Ottley imagines that "he might have written some whim-

sical opinions as to the etiquette and rules of precedence which he imagined proper amongst the different classes of saints and angels in heaven : and that in these opinions he had been found at variance with the Established Doctrines of the Church." Yet the piety expressed in most of his scriptural compositions does not suggest any light treatment of sacred subjects by him. He had, no doubt, a keen sense of humour, but I see nothing in his work as a whole to suggest the satirist. He was an excellent designer, and was most prodigal in the matter of production, and it is recorded that some time after his death his designs were sought after and highly prized, even by prominent artists. His Florentine Almanack was produced in 1464, and has been fully described by Strutt. One of his best prints, according to Vasari, is The Triumph of the Faith of Fra Girolamo Savonarola of Ferrara, and I am not disposed to disagree with him. Returning for an instant to the claim of priority by Germany, the opinion of Huber is worth quoting, and he emphatically states that if the German artists of the same period are superior in the

management of the burin, the Italian masters have infinitely the advantage in the grace and contour of the figures and the taste with which they are composed. This is true of all three artists, Baldini, Botticelli, and Benedetto Montagna, and it is worth noting that the phrase, "as lovely as a Botticelli," was commonly used to express merit that nearly reached perfection.

It is difficult, when one commences to write of the masters who adorned the Vatican, to avoid straying from the subject, and to keep studiously to those who were engravers as well as artists. One is apt to dwell so lovingly upon Raphael, Titian, Michael Angelo, Fra Angelico, and the army of geniuses who have adorned its walls, and forget that many in its ranks did not wield the burin. As Miss Porter says in *The Art of the Vatican*—"Perhaps when the to-be-hoped-far-away future has crumbled to ruins the Stanze and the Sistine Chapel, perhaps the soil of Italy will have ready a new race of giant creators, who can worthily replace the masterpieces of the vanished past. Meanwhile, for us the embers of that golden era still glow with a brilliancy

that dims all present achievement. Only one of many museums, where are garnered the Art treasures of the world, it is the Vatican which holds more completely than any other worthy examples of the greatest art epochs of all times."

CHAPTER VIII

THE BIRTH OF MEZZOTINT

We now approach a section of our subject which is of peculiar interest to us as a nation, namely the art of engraving in mezzotint, for, be it remembered, that England has been called the home of mezzotint. When, however, we begin to inquire into the origin of this fascinating phase of the engraver's art, we find that we have a thorny path to traverse, since difficulties galore abound even as they did when we first started. It seems almost incredible that any mystery should surround an art that is of comparatively recent origin, and yet mystification has sprung up around its discovery, and most conflicting arguments have been advanced in connection with it.

Popular belief gives the credit of its inception to Prince Rupert, Count Palatine of the Rhine, but ingenious authors have

AMELIA ELISABETHA D.G. HASSIÆ LANDGRAVIA &c.
COMITISSA HANOVIÆ, MVNTZENB:
Illustrissimæ Ca. Pr. ac Dnæ Dnæ WILHELMO VI DG. HASSIÆ LANDGR. &c. Duce Sermissimæ Matris
ac Incomparabilis Heroinæ Exemplum, ad virtutis & se spiritum Educatum, nouum, adhuc Insuperatæ nobilis Puerilitatis Ornat.
Anno Ætatis S.
Anno Dñi clɔ lɔc xliii

FIRST KNOWN MEZZOTINT ENGRAVING.

gone out of their way to suggest that the inventor of the art was either Evelyn or Sir Christopher Wren. In his *Micrographia*, dated 1667, Hooke says—"He (Sir Christopher Wren) was the first inventor of the Art of graving in mezzotinto : which was afterwards prosecuted and improved by His Royal Highness Prince Rupert, in a method somewhat different, upon the suggestion (as it is said) of the learned and ingenious John Evelyn, Esq. Of this Art some original essays are extant : viz., The Head of a Moor, etc., by the inventor ; The Executioner of John the Baptist, by the Prince, on the sword is the mark R.P.f. (*i.e.* Rupertus Princeps fecit), over it an electoral coronet." Now, beyond this statement by Hooke, there is not a shadow of evidence that Sir Christopher Wren ever engaged in engraving by mezzotint, and Evelyn's own writing conclusively proves that it was not he who instructed Prince Rupert, but that it was the prince who initiated him. So in looking for the originator or inventor of the process, we must go farther afield, and we owe it to the researches of Laborde

that the matter is rendered comparatively clear.

Judging by contemporary evidence, there appears to be little doubt that the inventor of mezzotint engraving was not Prince Rupert, or Evelyn, or Wren, but Ludwig von Seigen, who was born at Cassel in 1609. He was a man of wealth and influence, and at one time held the position of "Kammerjunker" to the Landgrave of Hesse Cassel. Endowed with a great love of Art, he continually experimented as an amateur, and in 1642, while living in Amsterdam, he completed a portrait of Amelia Elizabeth, Dowager Landgravine of Hesse, which he presented to the young Landgrave, accompanying his gift by a letter which seems to indicate his right to the title of the first engraver in mezzotint. Laborde gives a facsimile of this letter of Seigen, the original of which is preserved at Cassel, and which I consider of such importance, that it deserves to be transcribed *in extenso*.

It is as follows :—

"SERENE, HIGHBORN PRINCE AND GRACIOUS SIR,—My humble services are ever at the disposal of your Princely Grace.

"Since my affection as a subject, rather than the hope of reward, has ever urged me to your service, I therefore (without regard to the fact that my services in themselves small enough have by some means still further depreciated) have not wished to relax my diligence in devoting work and time to your service, as the present piece which I herewith humbly submit to your princely favour sufficiently shows.

"This is the print from copper, gracious Prince and Lord, which I promised to prepare for the ever praiseworthy memory of your Grace's mother, in order that many illustrious persons, acquainted with the actions with so widely famed a princess, might be enabled to possess the likeness of her person.

"But since I have discovered a new or singular invention of a kind never hitherto beheld, I have, on account of the nicety of the work, been able to have few copies struck off, not thousands, as in the case of ordinary engravings, and therefore can with them only oblige a few persons. Accordingly I have, as was just, made a beginning with your Princely Grace, and especially have thought it my duty and pleasure to dedicate it humbly to you, as the inscription placed underneath indicates, for these reasons: because to you as eldest and indeed only son of the reigning prince, the representation of your Grace's mother could not but be welcome; for the rest, because I could not neglect to dedicate to your Grace, as an extraordinary

amateur of Art, such a rare and hitherto unseen work of Art.

"How this work has been done no copper-plate engraver or artist can explain or imagine, for, as your Grace is aware, only three methods of engraving on copper have hitherto been seen.

"(1) Engraving or cutting in line (stechen oder schneider).

"(2) Etching or touching with the point (aetzen oder gradiren).

"(3) A method, hitherto very uncommon, called puncturing, also executed entirely with points, but in a different manner and with great labour and therefore unusual (letzlich ein noch gar ungewœuliche arth, so man puntzeniren heist, auch mit eitel stiplein jdoch anders und gar mühlich der wegen ungebrauchlich).

"The present method is, however, none of these, although here also, are merely little points and not a single line or stroke, though in some places it appears like a line, yet it is all merely dots, which information I did not wish to conceal from your Grace, as well skilled in Art. I herewith commend your Grace to the Divine protection for all princely well-being, and myself humbly to Him and to your Grace's favour.

"L. Von Seigen."

"A Son Altesse, Monseigneur Le Landgrave
"de Hessen Cassel.

"Amsterdam, 19*th August* 1642."

Mr John Chaloner Smith, who quotes the foregoing, points out that the third process referred to by Von Seigen was presumably the style practised by J. Morin and others, and which was said to have arisen from imitation of Vandyke's etching, and afterwards practised by Lutina, when it was called "opus mallei," and was something akin to stipple. Von Seigen published the portrait of the Dowager Landgravine of Hesse in 1643, and in 1644 produced portraits of William Prince of Orange and his princess, and then apparently rested from this work for quite ten years. Then, according to Chaloner Smith, *i.e.*, in 1654, Von Seigen met Prince Rupert at Brussels and confided the secret of his execution of the plates to him.

Prince Rupert, who was himself no mean executant, engaged Wallerant Vaillant to assist him, but he evidently did not consider that he was bound to secrecy, for he explained the process to Evelyn, and I believe to Sherwin, while Von Seigen was still living. Evelyn, in his *Sculptura*, says—

"His Highness did indulge me the liberty of publishing the whole manner and address of this

new way of engraving with a freedom perfectly generous and obliging. But, when I had well considered it (so much have been already expressed, which may suffice to give the hint to all ingenious persons how it is to be performed), I did not think it necessary, that an Art so curious and, as yet, so little vulgar (and which, indeed, does not succeed where the workman is not an accomplished designer and has a competent talent in painting likewise), was to be prostituted at so cheap a rate, as the more naked describing of it here would too soon have exposed it to."

This very frank statement, and the further assertion that he is "most ready (*sub sigillo* by His Highness's permission) to gratify any curious and worthy person with as full and perfect a demonstration of the entire Art as my talent and address will reach to," disposes of the story that is told by Decamps of how Theodore Caspar, a Furstenberg, bribed a son of Vaillant to divulge the secret to him. That Von Seigen kept the matter close for a time is certain, but Prince Rupert seems to have been exceedingly communicative, and Furstenberg probably learnt the process from Von Seigen as soon as the prince did, for he issued a plate within two years of the meeting at Brussels. The evi-

dence that we have seems altogether to displace the statement of Evelyn that the art of mezzotint engraving was "invented" by Prince Rupert, although he was an expert in the process, as his superb plate, the Great Executioner, issued in 1658, sufficiently proves.

Even then he had rivals, for Thomas of Ypres, Court painter at Vienna, who accompanied the Emperor Leopold to Frankfort, produced mezzotints the same year. It is but just to remember that, so far back as 1830, Dr Hugh W. Diamond, in a paper read before the Society of Antiquaries, pointed out that Prince Rupert was not, and could not have been, the inventor of mezzotint engraving, as earlier plates than his were in existence, and had been acquired by the authorities of the British Museum. It is, however, to the researches of Laborde in Germany and Holland, that we owe the settlement of many vexed questions, and especially the truth about Von Seigen.

The work of the inventor was continued by Wallerant Vaillant, at Amsterdam, who was a painter and etcher as well as a mezzotinter, and who, according to Wessely, scraped some 206 plates, only four of which

are dated, two in 1673 and two in 1675. Next in early importance we may place Johann Friedrich Leonart and Jan van Somer, brother of Paul van Somer, who with Blooteling, G. Valck, A. de Blois and J. Verkalje, all resided in England. Blooteling, by the way, is said to have been the inventor of the credle, or rocking tool, but I am inclined to think that a similar instrument must have been employed before.

We have seen how the Continental artists in mezzotint came to England, probably because of the presence of Prince Rupert in this country, and the prodigal encouragement which he gave to Art; and now we arrive at the first English engraver in mezzotint, an honour which belongs to William Sherwin. Sherwin was the son of the Rector of Wallington, in Herefordshire, and was born in 1650. He was an artist from choice, not necessity, and although he sold his prints in "little Britain," it was purely *pour s'amuse*. He married a granddaughter of the elder brother of General Monk, which probably accounts for his association with the Albemarle family, for whom he engraved many portraits. The question

arises, How did Sherwin become acquainted with the art of mezzotint? Some folks think that he first acquired his knowledge through the hints dropped by Evelyn in his *Sculptura*; but Sherwin undoubtedly met Prince Rupert at the home of the Duke of Albemarle, and an inscription on one of his plates indicates that he was directly instructed by the prince.

Grainger tells that Sherwin discovered the secret, and made use of a loaded file for laying the ground, and that Prince Rupert, on seeing one of his prints, suspected that his servant had lent his tool, which was a channelled roller, but on receiving full satisfaction to the contrary, made Sherwin a present of the instrument. Yet this hardly tallies with the inscription on Sherwin's Portrait of Charles II., a line of which runs —"Vestrae Celsitudinis gratia et favore sibi divulgatum." This seems to prove pretty conclusively that Sherwin was fully instructed by someone, *after* he had read Evelyn's book and that someone could hardly have been any other than Prince Rupert.

Although I have placed William Sherwin as the first English engraver in mezzotint,

his claim to the distinction has been disputed on grounds other than those to which I have referred. The Rev. James Chelsum, D.D., in his *History of the Art of Engraving in Mezzotinto*, awards the honour to Francis Place, a descendant of a wealthy family having property in the counties of York and Durham, who, he says, "scraped in mezzotinto (for he is said to have given himself to his favourite pursuits in 1665)," *i.e.*, before Sherwin produced his first plate. Now this is the merest quibble, for Place, who was intended for the law, was at this time under articles to an attorney in London. He quitted the city and gave up the law when the plague broke out, and although he mixed in artistic circles, and was intimate both with Sherwin and Blooteling, he never dated the prints he issued, and there is not a grain of evidence that the amateur was in advance of those whose work he delighted in. The balance or probability is all the other way, for Sherwin had access to Prince Rupert, and I am not aware that Place ever had that privilege. I admit that Place did good work, and it betrayed a marked originality ; but if we accept Walpole's state-

ment, he was most erratic, seldom completing what he undertook, that he delighted in rambling about the country, painting, drawing or engraving what pleased him, but he was altogether averse to any system of control. According to the same authority he refused a pension of £500 a year on condition that he would draw the ships of the Royal Navy, for the simple reason that he preferred freedom. Yet his work realised good prices for those days, for his small mezzotint of Archbishop Sterne sold for £10, and his oval of General Lambert for £5, 15s. 6d. One of his most noteworthy plates is the portrait of Henry Gyles, glass-painter of York, with the following inscription at the bottom :—"Henry Gyles, glass-painting for windows, as armes, sun-dials, history, landscapes, etc., done by Henry Gyles of the City of York. F. Place, f. 12mo." He usually scraped portraits, but subject pieces did not come amiss to him, and his Lady Confessing to a Monk, the Dutch Family, and A Reading Monk, after Vandyck, are well known. Chelsum also gives priority to Sir Ralph Cole, because, on the authority of Grainger, he scraped one mezzotint of

Charles II., for all which I give my vote in favour of Sherwin.

From the moment that Prince Rupert disclosed his secret, or that of Von Seigen, in the land of his adoption, mezzotint seems to have found its home. Heineken, in his *Idée Générale*, says—

"Quand le Prince Rupert y fit connoitre la gravure qu'on nomme la manière noir, elle a pris tellement le dessus et a été executée a la fin avec tant de finesse et d'esprit, que tout ce qu'on a faits dans d'autres pais, ne lui est millement comparable: ainsi fut elle nommée, par preference la *maniere* Angloise."

I will quote two other graceful tributes before I pass, the first from Delaborde, who writes—

"Like a grateful orphan this art took the name of her new adoptive mother—for she had become truly English—while they were repudiating her in other places."

And M. Charles Blanc says—

"The precision of the burin, the verve of etching, agreed better with the character of French Art. England is almost the only country that has known how to avail itself of the mezzotint process, and it is to its engravers that we have to look for illustrations of its methods."

It has been alleged more than once that the statement in Evelyn's *Sculptura* is obscure, and has been suggested that Prince Rupert brought the finished plate that adorns the book with him and only exhibited the tools. I turn to Evelyn's diary, under date 13th March 1661, and find the following :—

"This afternoon Prince Rupert showed me *with his own hand* the new way of graving called mezzotinto, which afterwards, by his permission, I published in my history of Chalcography : this set so many artists on worke, that they soone arrived to that perfection, it is since come to emulating the tenderest minatures." If language is something more than the art of concealing thought, this means that Prince Rupert did actually grave in Evelyn's presence.

A moot point arises respecting one of the next earliest English mezzotint engravers, Thompson, who was contemporary with Place, as to whether he scraped the plates which bear his name, or whether he only sold them. Grainger thinks that he simply sold them, and speaks of him as "Richard Thompson, who sold some of Van Somers'

prints, has been mistaken for the engraver. . . . I have seen the words 'Thompson *execudit*' to mezzotints of the Duchess of Portsmouth, the Countess of Exeter, the Countess of Stamford, the Lord John and Lord Bernard Stuart, Mrs Davis, and several others, but never 'Thompson *fecit*'" ; on the other hand gossipy Walpole specially speaks of the beautiful mezzotint of Nell Gwyn and her two sons, and believes that Thompson did carry out this work. The same chatty writer points out that Blooteling and Gerald Valck, who was formerly his servant and married his sister, worked together upon several mezzotints to which their names are affixed without discrimination, and that we therefore frequently find in catalogues plates of the same persons attributed to either of them.

Engraved by] CHARLES I. [*I. Beckett.*

CHAPTER IX

EARLY BRITISH MEZZOTINTERS

A STATELY procession of names of gifted men marks the first decade following the introduction of mezzotint into England, including D. Loggan, E. Luttrell, Isaac Beckett, R. Williams, Rixon Man, Oliver Robinson, W. Faithorne, Junr., R. White, and that great genius, J. Smith.

Luttrell was a Dublin man who was born in 1650, and who came to London to study law, but abandoned it for art. He is often wrongly described as "Henry" Luttrell, and as he seldom put his name to his prints, uncertainty has often arisen. Chaloner Smith attributes the plates of the Earl of Nottingham and the Earl of Ossory to him. He will ever be remembered for the fact that he inspired Isaac Beckett with a passion for engraving in mezzotint. Beckett, who was born in Kent in 1643, was apprenticed to a calico printer. He used to visit Luttrell,

and relinquished trade for engraving. I have seen it stated that he was taught by Lloyd, but imagine this is wrong, for though Lloyd was a printseller, Walpole emphatically states that he did not engrave. Beckett probably learned the publishing from him, for after making a good marriage, he published prints at the Golden Head, Old Bailey, and some few "under ye stares on ye north side of ye Royal Exchange." He appears as the engraver of plates published by A. Browne, and many others which are not acknowledged are believed to be his.

I quote a statement here which goes further than I am prepared to go, but which does honour to two distinguished men, and which is made by Mr Chaloner Smith. He says—"Isaac Beckett and Williams are entitled to be considered as the first native Englishmen who extensively practised and founded the school, the earlier works being chiefly executed by engravers not of English birth, and those that were so, as Place and Sherwin, having worked to a limited extent, so far as known without pupils and rather as amateurs than anything else."

Williams was a Welshman whose work is distinguished for its breadth and colour, his principal work being portraits of royal and distinguished persons after Wissing, Lely, Kneller, etc. His great claim to remembrance is that he had J. Smith for his pupil.

Before we touch this master of mezzotint, I may note that Evelyn's desire for secrecy was not shared by the engravers. In his *Ars Pictoria*, published in 1669, A. Browne gives the following description of art engraving in mezzotint :—

"The manner or way of mezzotinto :—First take a very well polished plate of copper and ruffen it all over with your Engin one way, then cross it over with the Engin again, and if you find occasion then cross it over the third time, until it be ruffened all over alike (that is to say) if it were to be printed it would print black all over; this done take charcole or black chalk to rub over the plate, and then draw your design with white chalk upon the plate, then take a sharp stift and trace out the outlines of the design you drew with the white chalk, and where you would have the light strike strongest, take a burnisher and burnish that part of the plate where you would have the light strike as clean as it was when it was first polished; where you would have the fainter light,

you must not polish it so much, and this way you may make it either fainter or stronger according to your fancy. As for the manner or shape of the Engin, they are divers, and if any ingenious person have a desire to have any made, the author will give them further directions."

That Browne's communicativeness stimulated many to try their prentice hands at the art of mezzotint may be taken for granted, and some few achieved a certain amount of distinction; but as it is impracticable to deal with everyone, I pass to him whom Walpole called "The best mezzotinter that has appeared who united softness with strength and finishing with freedom," namely—John Smith. Singularly enough, very little is known of the life of this distinguished and most successful man. He was, it is stated, born in 1654, although this is doubtful, and, as some aver, was apprenticed to Tillet, painter, of Moorfields, and at the expiration of his time applied to Beckett for work and was instructed by him, Williams, and Vandervaart in the art of mezzotinto. The balance of probability is that Williams had more hand in the tuition than Beckett; but whoever laid the

foundation found an apt pupil, one able to build beyond their intended height. Walpole's estimate of his powers is generally considered to be just, but Willshire strikes rather a discordant note when he says—"No doubt many of Smith's portraits are superior, large in style, decisive in form, often brilliant with light, and prove their author to have been a masterly workman. But other pieces are stiff, hard in handling, and want colour."

I confess that I do not quite understand what Willshire means by "other pieces," after going out of his way to tell us, what all knew, that Smith's portraits are superior, and that he himself was a master. Does he allude to the magnificent Holy Family, after Maratti, or to that after Schidone? to the Magdalens, after Titian, Loir, and Schalcken, or to the Venus, after Corregio? If so, which of them is hard? He cannot well allude to the nine plates of The Loves of the Gods, after the Titians at Blenheim, and hardly, I should imagine, to the Tarquin and Lucretia. It is a bit of a conundrum, and I am compelled to think that the statement was made for the sake of differing

from others. Naturally, all Smith's plates are not equally good: artists, like other mortals, suffer from liver and spleen, and at times lose their cunning; but a slip here and there does not justify anyone supposed to know in damning a great man with faint praise. Dr Chelsum, more generous, puts it on record that Lord Somers was so enraptured with Smith's work that he never travelled without having a portfolio of his plates beside him in the carriage.

The earliest prints attributed to Smith are those published by Browne, namely, Catherine, Queen of Charles II.; Charles I., and Charles II., none of which are mentioned by Bromley. Then we have James, Duke of York, which was copied in line by Loggan, and Mary Beatrice, Duchess of York, copied in reverse and in line by Vanderbanc. Smith afterwards appeared to have taken up his residence with Sir Godfrey Kneller, and to have commenced that wonderful series of portraits which have made him famous. But John Smith was more than an artist; he was a sound business man, and after a comparatively brief connection with E. Cooper and others, he set up for himself

at the sign of the Lyon and Crown, in Russell Street, Covent Garden, and became a print-seller and publisher of the plates of others as well as of his own. It was as well for him that he did, judging by one of Walpole's unconsciously ironic sayings. That racy writer says—"There is a print by him of James II., with an anchor, but no inscription, which, not being finished when the king went away, is so scarce that I have known it sold for above a guinea!"

Smith printed from plates originally engraved by Beckett, Williams, Lens and Simon, and it has been made a slur on him that he affixed his name thereto; but he never did this until he had so retouched the originals that they were, strange to say, vastly improved. I am not advocating the practice, but it is as well to be just before we are censorious, and to remember that in business all men do not think alike. There is a story of one plate, told by Walpole, which will bear repeating. Schalcken had to paint King William III. by candlelight, and placed a candle in the monarch's hand, keeping him in pose till the tallow ran down in his fingers, and then, says Walpole, to show

his ill-breeding, he painted himself in a like position. This is the portrait of Schalcken which Smith scraped. After a busy life, he sold all his plates and retired, having amassed a competency. These plates came into the possession of Messrs Boydell, and at their sale in 1818 the following sums were realised: —135 plates of portraits, £140; 193 plates of subjects, £49.

Any amount of doubt surrounds the life-story of John Smith; doubt as to the date of his birth, and doubt as to the date of his death, which some say took place in 1720. But the inscription on his tomb at St Peter's, Northampton, settles the last point. It is as follows:—"Near this place lye the remains of John Smith, of London, Gent., the most eminent engraver in mezzotinto in his time. He died XVII Jan., MDCCXLII., aged xc." "Also near this place lye the remains of Sarah, his wife, and two of their children. She died xvi. May, MDCCXVII." The following is painted on the tomb—"Also of (Benjamin) Smith, his son. He died Sept. xvii., 1751, aged 45." It is noteworthy that Walpole calls Smith "John Smith (the younger)," suggesting that his father

practised the art, but Mr Chaloner Smith says there is no foundation for such assumption whatever.

I have, naturally, given prominence to the works of J. Smith because of his remarkable excellence, but it would be unfair to pass over a contemporary of his, George White, who did much to improve the art of engraving in mezzotint. George White was the son of Robert White, who also scraped some fine portraits in mezzotint, including the Countess of Arundel, the Dukes of Richmond and Ormond, and Dr Briggs. He was a pupil of Loggan, and worked principally with the graver, his plates being readily recognised by wide borders, which do not improve their appearance, and by a lack of finish, which Grainger thinks is "compensated by the truth of his drawing, in which he was never exceeded." Walpole honoured him by giving his portrait in his *Anecdotes*, and tells of one or two of his curious habits —one being to throw proofs of plates that he had executed, haphazard into a cupboard, where they lay until his death, when they were sold to a print-seller in the Poultry, who obtained a handsome recompense.

Robert White received considerable sums, for those times, being paid as much as £30 for one plate; but as he did little in mezzotint-engraving, interest in him chiefly centres in the fact that he was the father of a distinguished son. "The works of George White," says Chelsum, "form, as it were, a new epoch in the history of mezzotinto. He appears to have been the first who introduced a very successful method of etching his plate first, and then scraping it, which has since been adopted by other masters in the improved state of the art, and which is thought to have given a peculiar degree of spirit to his performances. George White is reported also to have made use of a graver for forming the black spot in the eyes, which, in preceding mezzotintos, he observed had never been distinct. He carried the art altogether, certainly, to a great degree of perfection, and has left behind him many beautiful prints." He was born somewhere about 1670, and died, presumably, in 1735, but these dates are not capable of verification, though it is certain he was alive in 1731, when a print by him of Bishop Weston is dated. His work is singularly

tender and beautiful, and is remarkable for its brilliant effects of light and shade. Walpole especially praises his mezzotint of Sylvester Petyt, which he considers "remarkably fine," and Chelsum notes that there is a scarce impression of this print with ornaments on the right-hand side which do not appear in the ordinary plates. Most of his plates were published by Samuel Sympson, who had a shop near Catherine Street, Strand, and afterwards removed to Maiden Lane. Every writer is fain to give George White a meed of praise, and Gilpin says of him—"His mezzotintos are very beautiful, Baptiste, Wing, Sturges and Hooper are all admirable prints. He used to say that old and young Parr were the best prints he ever scraped." Dr Chelsum, after praising Dutch industry in the art, says that in point of excellence the palm must be given to our own nation, and adds—"White and Smith have no rivals among their contemporaries, and M'Ardell, Houston and Fisher may preserve our superiority in later times."

The best epitaph of White is to be found on his plate of Laughing Boy, sold by Sympson, "at his print shop in ye Strand,

near Catherine Street," which was graved upon the plate from which the ground had been erased. It ran as follows :—

"Boy turn thy Laughter into Floods of Tears,
And tune thy Instrument to Mournful Airs ;
Play to the numbers of my broken Verse,
Whilst I the Loss of Friend and Art rehearse !
A Friend ! whom None in Friendship could surpass ;
An Artist worth all Monuments of Brass !
O Shakespeare, for thy Soul to raise my Flame !
Thy Musick, Purcell, to resound his Fame !
But what can Verse or Musick raise so High
As this, his Last, and Silent Harmony !
On Him, nor Verse, nor Musick, need be spent,
Read but George White and That's his Monument."

Higher tribute cannot be paid ; no words of mine can add emphasis to this eulogium. His best known plates are—The Right Hon. Sir John Coke, Knight, who was Master of Requests and Secretary of State to King Charles I., 1625-32, and Colonel Thomas Blood, who was at one time an officer under Oliver Cromwell. If all accounts are to be accepted as correct, this individual was a most dangerous and, fortunately, most unfortunate person. He was credited with having attempted to surprise Dublin Castle, when he failed ; with attempt-

ing to kill the Duke of Ormond, when he failed again ; and with trying to abstract the Crown Jewels from the Tower, which was another failure. He was pensioned by Charles II., but found prison at last, and died in 1680.

The next master of mezzotint was James M'Ardell, one of the finest artists of his day, who was born at Greek Street, Dublin, about 1729, and was apprenticed to John Brooks, with whom he came to London in 1747. He published his prints at the Golden Head, Covent Garden, and died 2nd June 1765, and was buried in the picturesque churchyard at Hampstead. Lyson says that there was an inscription on his tomb stating that he died in his thirty-seventh year, yet many writers insist that he was born nineteen years before, as it would appear, he was thought of. Two things are quite certain, namely, that M'Ardell was a youth when he came to London, and that Brooks did not come till 1747 ; so the variants as to his age, without Lyson's testimony, may be readily dismissed. He has been rechristened more

than once, some writers calling him simply Ardel, while Nagler gives him the double names of "James Marc," which I found no reason to suppose was his. Of his skill there can be no doubt, and his association with Reynolds sufficiently shows the esteem in which he was held by that great painter. Reynolds published M'Ardell's plate of his picture of Lady Charlotte Fitz William, whose son was created first Earl of Zetland, and he certainly would not have done this unless he had admired to the full the work of his collaborator. Northcote says that Reynolds considered that his own fame would be preserved by the skill of M'Ardell when his pictures were past recall; and, if this be so, I can only say that it is a pity more painters do not think as he did.

From all I can learn, it seems that M'Ardell was one of the kindest and best of men, ever ready to help a comrade or to benefit Art for Art's sake. Many of the plates are scarce, and I may mention the portraits of William Benn (Hudson), Timothy Bennett (Budd), John Pine (Hogarth), George Washington (Pond),

Maria, Countess of Waldegrave (Reynolds), and some few others as coming within this category. He by no means limited himself to scraping portraits, but executed many plates after Rembrandt, and the exceptionally fine Virgin with a Glory and Angels (Murillo), St Jerome kneeling before a Crucifix (Murillo), Virgin and Infant Saviour (Vandyck), and the Finding of Moses, by the same painter. The best known examples of his work are—Maria, Countess of Coventry, *née* Miss Gunning, after Cotes, the celebrated beauty who married the sixth Earl of Coventry; Maria, Countess of Waldegrave, daughter of Sir Edward Walpole, who, after the death of Lord Waldegrave, wedded H.R.H. the Duke of Gloucester, and Lady Fenoulhet. Mr J. Chaloner Smith sounds a wise note of warning to collectors when he writes—

"The greater portion of M'Ardell's plates fell, after his death, into the hands of Sayer; five unfinished ones were completed (*i.e.*, Nathaniel Bucks, Charles Lord Cathcart, Jane, Lady Cathcart and son, William Harvey, and Thomas Sydenham), but many others were tampered with

without altering the addresses, and some were falsified to resemble proofs. It is, therefore, necessary to observe great caution in purchasing several of the prints by this engraver."

I have often heard M'Ardell's work unfavourably compared with that of his fellow-pupil Houston, and yet I think that this is due to, perhaps, a little doubt as to their difference of character. M'Ardell was to Houston and to Spooner much as Henry Moorland was to George, the one painstaking and methodical, the other wayward and careless, in about the same proportion as they were gifted. With his more staid habits M'Ardell ever held the affection of his less steady brethren, and his generosity, without his genius, is sufficient to keep his memory green.

M'Ardell's great contemporary and fellow-pupil, Richard Houston, was also born in Dublin, some six or seven years earlier than his most successful confrère. I mean successful in a purely commercial sense, for Houston might have been a dangerous rival to M'Ardell had not his habits obscured his natural genius. He worked, when he did work, at fever heat, and the vigour of

Painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds. *Engraved by Houston.*

MISS HARRIET POWELL.

his production is scarcely to be equalled. Chaloner Smith says that he was considered at the outset of his career to rival, if not to surpass, M'Ardell, in spirit and fire, and there is little doubt that he would have run him very closely, and probably outstripped him, but for his fatal inclination to put off work to the very last moment. He came to London about the same time as M'Ardell, and established himself near Drummond's at Charing Cross; but procrastination soon brought him into disrepute, and Redgrave is responsible for the story that Sayer consigned him to Fleet prison, nominally for debt, but actually in order that he might know where to find him. I see no reason to doubt this tale, since it was easy enough to arrest for debt in those days, but it was equally easy for a man of Houston's genius to free himself from the shackles, and this he must have done, since he was certainly not dependent upon Sayer in the latter part of his life, when he principally worked for Carrington Bowles. He is best known by his series of Statesmen, after Hoare, and for portraits of celebrated divines; but he successfully reproduced some Rembrandts, and

is known to have made two small etchings after this master, which were published by Sayer. The list of Houston's portraits is a long one, and most of these are well known, but his subject pieces are not so well understood. Perhaps the most popular of the last are the Virgin and Child, after Raphael, and the prints of Waterfowl, after Teniers; but I am much more inclined to favour some of the scenes from Shakespeare, especially the Romeo and Juliet, after Wilson, and the powerful Newsmonger, from Act iv. Sc. iv. of *King John*, after Penny. The spirit of this plate is shown in the quotation appended—

"I saw a Smith stand with his Hammer thus,
The whilst his Iron did on th' Anvil cool,
With open mouth swallowing a Taylor's news."

Yet Houston must not be judged by a limited number of plates, but by his works as a whole, and by the opinion that was formed of it by competent critics during the age in which he lived. In this matter difficulties are always likely to arise, for the majority of the good old writers stopped short at certain periods, and refused to criticise those with whom they were, in some instances, in daily contact. We are

VALENTINE GREEN.

not so particular now; probably the pressing needs of daily journalism have removed a part of our natural sensitiveness; but the fact remains that our best workers in mezzotint are dependent largely upon modern critics for eulogy, if not for appreciation. Good old Dr Chelsum, in noting the artists of our own country and in his own time, does go so far as to say that "among them the names of M'Ardell and Houston deservedly stand foremost"; but although praise from such a quarter is praise indeed, it does not adequately express all that these artists did for Art during the early years that followed upon the discovery of the new and brilliant method of engraving. Houston's work is judged well enough now, and he loses nothing in posthumous fame; but the question must arise in relation to him, as it does concerning most artists, why he did not receive the fullest measure of appreciation when he was still with us. It is a national trick of ours to heap honours upon the dead poets and dead artists, and to refuse them full meed of approbation and reward when living, and the loss to Art and Letters that has been occasioned by this

practice is not easily to be measured. I have selected as an illustration the mezzotint of Miss Harriet Powell, a vocalist of note and an admirable actress. This lady, so far as can be ascertained, married Col. Kenneth Mackenzie, commander of the 78th Foot, who was created (1766) Viscount Fortrose, and (1771) Earl of Seaforth, in the Peerage of Ireland. Mr Chaloner Smith points out that this union was probably kept secret, as no mention was made of it at the time, but there are not sufficient reasons extant for presuming that the marriage did not take place. Beneath the portrait, which was painted by Reynolds, and scraped by Houston in 1771, are the following lines :—

"Say, little foolish flutt'ring thing,
Whither, ah ! whither would you wing
Your airy flight ?
Stay here and sing
Your mistress to delight.
No, No, No,
Sweet Robin, you shall not go ;
Where, you wanton, could you be,
Half so happy as with me ?"

This is a beautiful specimen of Houston's

art, exhibiting all that softness and delicacy, all that wonderful depth of light and shade of which he was capable.

Another fine mezzotint is that of the Right Hon. Henry Pelham, son of the first Lord Pelham, who after distinguishing himself at the battle of Preston, became, in 1718, member of Parliament for Seaford. He filled several offices under Sir Robert Walpole, and was subsequently First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer, from August 1743 until his death in March 1764. The picture was painted by William Hoare in 1752, and, as it was announced, was, "To be had at Mr Russell's Toy Shop at Charing Cross, London, and Mr Hoare at Bath."

The portrait of Maria, Countess of Waldegrave, afterwards Duchess of Gloucester, which was painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds, was also engraved in mezzotint by Houston, and is regarded as one of his finest plates.

The next English mezzotinter of note who most nearly approaches Houston is William Faithorne, junr., son of William

Faithorne, the line engraver, whose romantic history would fill a stirring volume. Faithorne the elder needs no praise from me, his work is too well known; and as I am just now limited to mezzotints, I will only briefly sketch his career. He fought on the king's side during the disastrous Civil War, and was captured and imprisoned at Aldersgate, where he pursued his calling as an engraver. Subsequently released, he went to France, but was ultimately permitted to return, and honoured Printing House Square, where the offices of the *Times* now stand, by making that his place of residence. Most authorities agree that his son, William Faithorne, junr., who elected to work in mezzotint, was a man of irregular habits, but none can gainsay the excellence of his work. As I cannot comprehend what service is rendered by making up scandals or keeping dishonour—if any ever existed—alive, I prefer to leave the subject. Our best men in Art and Letters are known to have failings, and it seems to me idle to repeat tales which, even at the time, appear to have been only hear-

say or idle gossip. We may take it that Faithorne, junr., was careless enough or he would have scored more heavily than he did, but, having said that, we have said enough.

One of the most interesting mezzotints engraved by Faithorne is of Charles I., which is something like the print by Faber, junr., and bears the announcement, "W. Faithorne fec, E. Cooper ex." At the top are the words, "Corruptibilem pro incorruptible," and beneath are the same verses which appear on Faber's print, and which should give joy to the ladies and gentlemen who annually decorate the statue of the monarch in Trafalgar Square.

"Looking to Jesus so our sovereign stood,
Praying for those who Thirsted for his Blood;
But high in Bliss with his Celestial Crowne,
Now with an Eye of Pity hee looks Downe
While some Attaque his other life his Fame
Ludlow revived to blot the Royal Name
On sacred Majesty Profanely treads,
Madd to sett up ye beast with many Heads.
New Regicides bad as the Old dare call
The Martyrs' blood on their own heads to Fall,

And black as those who Frocks and Visors wore.
There barefac'd Hangmen trample on his Gore
Can it bee silent, can it cease to cry
Such Feinds forbid it in repose to Lye!
'Tis well the blood of God speaks better Things
Than that of Abell or a murdered King's."

There is also considerable charm about Faithorne's portrait, after Lely, of Elizabeth Cooper, who is represented taking grapes from the hands of a young kneeling Moor. The detail here is very choice, and beneath the second states are the lines—

"Beauty commands submission as its due,
Nor is't the Slave alone that owns this true,
Much fairer Youths shall this just tribute pay,
None Fate deplore, but thankfully obey."

I hope these lines are Faithorne's, for a graceful compliment covers a multitude of sins.

CHAPTER X

MORE MASTERS OF MEZZOTINT

FROM Houston and Faithorne, I pass to that great master of mezzotint—Valentine Green. His is a name which can never fail to be acclaimed, for he was not only the leader of his day in the ranks of engravers, but was the first exponent of the art to whom the Royal Academy deigned to give recognition. It seems strange to think that up to his time the art of the engraver was held in such slight regard as not to merit anything save condescension from the painter; stranger still to remember that the prejudice continues, and that the men who popularise the painter, and make his name a household word, and his works available for the adornment of the humblest home, are not yet publicly placed in the position which they undoubtedly occupy. Time must change this, as it has changed many things, and for the sake of Art I

trust it will not be long before it does so. Before alluding to the life and work of Valentine Green, who might have remained a solicitor's clerk all his life had he not been born a genius, it is well to remember what that usually accurate, but not at all eulogistic, chronicler, Bryan, says of him. Bryan writes :—

"Green participates with M'Ardell and Earlom in the merit of having been the first artists who gave consequence and variety to the particular mode of engraving to which they devoted themselves; and it is worthy of remark that Green's celebrated engravings of Hannibal and Regulus, after the pictures by West, in the Royal Collection, were the first plates of equal magnitude and importance that had appeared. These were succeeded by several others of similar consideration, which will ever rank among the ablest and most energetic efforts of mezzotint."

I agree with all this, but I am inclined to go further than Bryan, for however great M'Ardell and Earlom, of whom I shall speak later, were in Art, I hold Valentine Green to be the superior. It has been the fashion to sneer at Green because he accepted the doubtful honour of being made an Associate Engraver of the Royal Academy,

but, to impartial minds, it will seem pretty clearly apparent that he did this, not to enhance his own reputation, which needed no bolstering, but in order to compel recognition of the artistic genius of his most neglected comrades. His acceptance has always seemed to me, taken in the light of his known character, to have been an act of self-sacrifice, for no half distinction could honour Green, and the nobler laurels that he won sustain my opinion. A born artist, his one thought was to advance Art, and when he accepted the Academy's crown of thorns he did so, in my opinion, to benefit his fellows. Just think of his early training, and this becomes apparent. He was born in an Oxfordshire village, Salford, near Chipping Norton, and his father was simply a dancing-master. Now, however much we allow the great part dancing played in the social life of the middle seventies, we cannot admit that a professional instructor was likely to hold any distinguished place in the eye of exclusive society. Dickens showed this, at a much later period, in his magnificent novel, *Dombey and Son*, when he portrayed the indignation of the

Baronet against poor Mr Baps, the dancing-master at Dr Blinker's school, and Dickens was the most discriminating critic of the views of the society of his day that we have. It is idle to suppose that the prejudice which existed in his time was less in a far more exclusive age, hence I am compelled to the opinion that Valentine Green, from a social point of view, started in life very heavily handicapped. It is natural to suppose that when his father articled him, somewhere about 1755, to Mr Phillips, the Town-Clerk of Evesham, he thought his son was obtaining a rise in life. But Evesham was the very worst place in England to which to send a lad of true artistic temperament.

Who does not know its old-world associations, its beauty of surrounding, its architectural, ecclesiastical and sylvan charm? Valentine Green drank in the delights of the place in which his lot was cast; he realised all the poetry of the spot, and its subtle influence, acting upon his artistic imagination, determined his future career. We have reason to be thankful to Green, the dancing-master, when he sent his son

to such a town, for not all the possible emoluments of an honourable legal career could swamp the enthusiasm of an artist born, who might well have exclaimed with Moore—

> "And O if there be an Elysium on earth,
> It is this; it is this!"

So Valentine Green broke his indentures, at least so it is said, and, in 1760, became a pupil of Robert Hancock, the best known line engraver in "the faithful city" of Worcester. Here all the delights of scenery and antiquarianism to which he had been accustomed in Evesham were emphasised, and here his artistic education proper may be said to have commenced.

It may be taken for granted that the five years spent by Valentine Green under the experienced tuition of Robert Hancock, who, beside being an admirable engraver, was also designer to the Royal Porcelain Works, Worcester, were fraught with vast consequence to the future master of mezzotint. He not only had a man of rare fancy and consummate skill to guide him, but he was surrounded by beauty, natural and man-

created, such as is rarely to be found in one place. It is impossible for anyone of an artistic temperament not to revel in the varied scenes which the grey old city presents. The river, woods, and hills shown in new lights a dozen times a day; the stately cathedral, wonderful in its contrasts of colour, and giving rare opportunity for the study of those depths of light and shade which the art of mezzotint so admirably displays; the many other architectural gems which the city possesses, and the ever-shifting scenes and studies of life to be seen in the Market Square, especially during the hop season, must have been sources of unfailing delight to Valentine Green, and have stimulated him to exertions in the realm of Art which, midst less inspiring surroundings, might not so fully have been called forth. How much impressed he was is shown in his *History and Antiquities of Worcester*, a volume which proves that if the author had not been great in Art he might have made a mark in letters. It was in 1760 that Valentine Green went to Worcester, and in 1765 he quitted the West for London, and set himself seriously

to the work of engraving in mezzotint. How speedily success followed is well known. He exhibited at the Society of Artists a year after his arrival in the Metropolis, and was elected a member of the Society in 1767; exhibited at the Royal Academy, 1774, and was elected an Associate Engraver in the year following. I have spoken about this appointment already, and need only add that the half-hearted recognition of the Academy was followed by his appointment as mezzotint engraver to the king. Valentine Green was fortunate enough, during his early days in London, to find favour with Alderman Boydell, for whom he did such good work that his future seemed assured. In an evil hour for him, however, he received from the reigning Duke of Bavaria the exclusive right to engrave the pictures in the Düsseldorf Gallery, which was destroyed during the siege of the city, but not until he had published some twenty-two plates; the loss, however, was great, and he did not really recover from it until, in 1805, he was appointed keeper to the newly-founded British Institution.

It would be impossible in my space limit to enumerate even a tithe of the works that he produced, for considerably more than four hundred plates were engraved by him; his portraits, after Reynolds, Romney, Batoni, Gainsborough, West, Dance and Zoffany being, perhaps, the best known. He excelled in this direction, but his subject works, after Rubens, Murillo, Vandyck, F. Barocci, Domenichino, L. Carracci, and R. Morton Page are distinguished by the same excellence which marked his portraits, and it is not easy to signal any out for special mention.

His plates after Sir Joshua Reynolds were—Countess of Aylesford, 1783; The Bedford Family, 1778; Miss Campbell, 1779; Sir W. Chambers, 1780; Lady Betty Compton, 1781; The Earl of Dalkeith, 1778; Lady Betty Delme, 1779; Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, 1780; Lady Jane Halliday, 1779; Countess of Harrington, 1780; Lady Henrietta Herbert, 1778; Lady Caroline Howard, 1778; Lady Louisa Manners, 1779; Duchess of Rutland, 1780; Countess of Salisbury, 1781; Lady Talbot, 1782;

Viscountess Townshend, 1780; Ladies Waldegrave, 1781.

It will be noticed that Valentine Green did not engrave any Reynolds' picture during the latter's lifetime, after Lady Aylesford in 1783. The reason for this was a dispute between the engraver and the painter concerning the picture of Mrs Siddons as the Tragic Muse. Green claimed that the picture was promised to him, and when it was given to Haward, he wrote a very strong letter, dated 31st May, to Sir Joshua, who replied to it in equally strong terms the next day, 1st June 1783. These letters, which are still in existence, are too long to print, but Sir Joshua had by far the best of the argument, and evidently took such umbrage about the claim, that he never after allowed Valentine Green to engrave another of his pictures.

There is no doubt that the subject of Mrs Siddons as the Tragic Muse was far more suited to the style of engraving of Francis Haward than it was to that of Valentine Green. In Mr Green's letter he shows that he was a publisher as well as an engraver, for he suggests that he could

have employed Haward to engrave it for him, had Sir Joshua wished it; but the latter evidently preferred to deal directly with Haward.

Among his more celebrated portraits after other masters are—The Elector of Bavaria, after P. Batoni; Sir T. W. Wharton, The Earl of Derby and the Marquess of Huntly, after Vandyck; Richard Cumberland and Mrs Yates, after Romney; William Powell and Robert Bensley as King John and Hubert, after Mortimer; Garrick and Mrs Pritchard in *Macbeth*, after Zoffany, and portraits of Mortimer and of Sir Joshua Reynolds. Other of his great works beside portraits are—The Stoning of Stephen, 1776; Raising of Lazarus, Christ and the Little Children, Peter's Denial, Jacob Blessing the Sons of Joseph, 1768; Daniel and Belshazzar's Dream, 1777; Nathan and David, 1784; St Peter and St John Going to the Sepulchre, The Three Faithful Women at the Cross, Alexander and his Physician, Regulus Leaving Rome to return to Carthage, Hannibal, Mark Antony's Oration, Agrippina Weeping over the Urn of Germanicus, Death of Epaminondas,

Death of the Chevalier Bayard, all after West.

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, and St John (with the Lamb), are after Murillo ; The Annunciation and the Nativity, after F. Barocci ; The Virgin and Child, after Domenichino ; The Entombment of Christ, after L. Carracci ; The Descent from the Cross, The Presentation in the Temple, and The Visitation, after Rubens ; Time and Love, after Vandyck ; and as foils which exhibit his versatility, The Sulky Boy, The Disaster of the Milkpail, and The Child of Sorrow, after R. Morton Page.

If one were to pen all that might be said about this artist, author, publisher and organiser, it would read like adulation rather than honourable regard. There is, however, no need to praise him ; his work lives and bears undying evidence to his skill and rich artistic instinct, and while that remains, his fame also is assured. Valentine Green died in St Alban's Street, London, on 29th June 1813.

He was a warm-hearted man, a little prone to be hasty, but a fine organiser,

with considerable business aptitude, and a firm friend. He, perhaps, essayed too much, for he published as well as engraved; and I have already alluded to his skill as an author, and with so many qualifications he would probably have been a rich man had he limited his efforts to England, for the chaos that abounded on the Continent was sufficient to upset the schemes of the most prudent and far-seeing, while Art was advancing here by leaps and bounds. Yet his varied experience must have been of vast benefit, and save for his own sake, one could not wish his work undone.

From Valentine Green I turn to his great brother in Art, Richard Earlom. This artist also did not start life under the most auspicious circumstances, if some chroniclers are to be believed, since his father occupied the post of parish clerk of St Sepulchre; but I do not overlook the fact that these positions in the City formerly did—and still do—carry with them very considerable emoluments, and that handsome additions are often made to the nominal salary. I am compelled to the conclusion that

Earlom the elder must have been in comfortable circumstances, for he was able to place his son as a pupil with Cipriani, which a poor man could hardly have afforded to do; still his social position cannot be described as being very exalted. Richard Earlom was born in 1743, and it is noteworthy that both Joubert and Nagler state that he was born in 1728, and that he died in 1794, whereas he died at Exmouth Street, Clerkenwell, in 1822. Both these writers are a little confused about Earlom, for they attribute his *Liber Veritatis* to one Robert Earlom, who, so far as I am aware, never existed. Richard Earlom is credited with being the first artist who made use of the point in mezzotint, and, however this may be, many of his finest efforts are brought about in this way. It was in 1777 that Alderman Boydell brought out the *Liber Veritatis*, for which Earlom executed two hundred plates, after the style of the original drawings by Claude Lorraine, and those plates, Bryan says, or most of them, became the property of the Duke of Devonshire. He did not confine himself to mezzotints, for he was a capable etcher, worked

now and again in stipple, and drew in chalk.

Expert opinion is very variable as to Earlom's ability. Thus Chaloner Smith, usually so fair, makes a remark that must grate upon some people. He says—"Although he (Earlom) overcame many difficulties (some of his pieces, after Van Huysum, being very much admired), he cannot, on the whole, be considered to have been successful in proving mezzotint the best style of engraving for all descriptions of painting." I do not suppose that any sane person ever considered that mezzotint alone was the best style for all descriptions of painting; most certainly Earlom did not, or he would not have heightened his effects with the point. Maberly suggested, years back, a union of mezzotint and aquatint, noting that—"Light foliage coming away from a dark background is seldom well represented in mezzotint, which is too soft and undefined for the crisp and sparkling isolated lights which are continually occurring in the leaves of trees." As a set-off, I will quote the opinion of M. Charles Blanc, who writes on this subject as follows:—

"In mezzotinto strength can be exhibited equally well in the touch of the lights scraped into life as in the shadows, the softness of which may, if need exist, be strengthened by etching.

"We have seen that classical engraving invented numerous ingenious variations by which any objects might be characterised through incision of the copper—metallic and reflecting bodies as well as the satiny surface or thorny stalk of a flower, the down of a peach as well as the rough shell of a nut and the rind of a lemon. Reduced to its own resources mezzotinto, *though managed by such a master as Richard Earlom*, has but one grain to express so many different surfaces, and can produce them with an uniform surface only."

I can quite understand M. Blanc speaking a little diffidently of mezzotint, which did not find favour in France, but he is quite fair. He speaks of the "certain poetry, vague — yet impressive — like that of a dream," which pertains to mezzotint, even while he praises the "precision of the burin" and "the *verve* of etching." It is sufficient that he has no half praise for Richard Earlom. That some of Earlom's pieces were much admired is not extraordinary, since those fruit and flower plates of his, after Van Huysum and Van Os, are

some of the best of his many good works. Of the portraits scraped by Earlom, the best known are the Duke of Gloucester (Hamilton), T. Newton, Bishop of Bristol (West), Lord Heathfield (Reynolds), the Duke of Richmond and the Duke of Arenberg (Vandyck), Rubens' Wife (Rubens), Portrait of Rembrandt and Rembrandt's Wife (Rembrandt), and a portrait of James M'Ardell. He also produced a plate of Lord Nelson, after the original picture presented to the Corporation of London by Alderman Boydell, which is still in the Guildhall, and an interesting portrait of the unfortunate Admiral Kempenfelt (after T. Kettle), who, with nearly 900 souls, went down in the *Royal George* while that vessel was undergoing repairs off Spithead. His etchings are chiefly after Salvator Rosa, N. Poussin, A. Sacchi, Guido, Tintoretto and Guercino. I have mentioned his fruit and flower pieces as among the best of his subject works, those after Jan Van Huysum being exceptionally fine, and among others I am inclined to give premier rank to David and Bathsheba, after A. Van der Werff; the Presentation in the Temple, after

Rembrandt, and The Miser, after Quentin Matsys. This, of course, is simply an individual opinion, for many other fine plates might be quoted, but I do not think that connoisseurs will quarrel with the limited selection made, seeing that if I were to give detailed reasons for my choice a long essay on Earlom would be essential. Of one thing I am certain, namely, that no impartial mind will grudge to Earlom the compliment paid to him by M. Charles Blanc.

Other mezzotinters of note quickly followed, and among them I may briefly notice two pupils of Valentine Green, namely, James Walker and John Dean. The first-named is sometimes confounded with William Walker, which is a singular error. James Walker, the son of a captain in the Mercantile Marine, was born in 1748, and after serving his pupilage with Green, devoted himself chiefly to engraving in mezzotinto. At the age of thirty-six he was appointed engraver to the Empress Catherine of Russia, a post he held for nineteen years, when he returned, and died in London in 1808. His prints, after Romney, are par-

ticularly good. There is some dubiousness about John Dean having been a pupil of Valentine Green, but I am not in a position to deny an oft-repeated assertion, so I let the matter stand. He was born in 1750, and died in 1798, leaving work of rare delicacy behind him, so much so, that it is an added laurel to Green to presume that he was Dean's instructor. Of special merit are his plates after Reynolds, Hoppner, and Morland.

It would be an easy task to continue to dwell upon the work of the earliest and most brilliant exponents of the art of mezzotint, but the theme could easily be made almost inexhaustible, and might well prove wearisome. Yet there are names which may not be passed, such, for instance, as Corbot and Finlayson, Dixon Fisher, Hodges, Purcell, Pether and Reynolds. Nor, looking abroad, should we fail to notice those early workers, Quiter, Van de Bruggen, Van der Berge, Schenck, Lens, Sarabat, Barras, Bouys, Verschuring or Vandervaart. Even this list would be sadly lacking if I omitted to mention that brilliant artist, Jacques Christolfe Le

Blon, who came to London in 1720. Le Blon was, I believe, the inventor of printing in colour from mezzotint blocks, and he certainly was the author of a work published both in English and in French, entitled, "*Colorito; or, the Harmony of Colouring in Painting, reduced to Mechanical Practice under Easy Precept and Infallible Rules, together with some Coloured Figures, in order to render the said Precepts and Rules intelligible not only to Painters, but even to all lovers of painting.*" His methods were not very successful here, and he left for the Hague in 1732, and died in Paris in 1741.

CHAPTER XI

A GREAT EXPONENT OF STIPPLE

THE high-sounding title of "The Achilles of Art" was conferred on Francesco Bartolozzi by Anthony Pasquin, and for all its apparent extravagance there is not a grain of flattery about it. In many respects Bartolozzi towers above his fellows for excellence in light and colour, delicacy of manipulation—though he could be bold—and for rapidity in execution, and moreover, for his unusual anatomical knowledge, which enabled him to stamp the works created by his genius with the impress of truth. He was at once a painter, etcher and engraver, equally at home with the brush, the pencil, and the burin; but it is with his greatness as an etcher and as an engraver that I have most to do.

It would be interesting to know how much, if any, of the wonderful ease and facility which he possessed was due to the

FRANCESCO BARTOLOZZI.

accident of his birth, for his father was a goldsmith in Florence, and the graving tools used in decorative work for metal vessels must have been familiar to the boy from infancy. Perhaps he watched some tyro in the art in which he afterwards so greatly excelled, and gained an insight into the processes of manipulation before he was old enough to handle a tool. There is no reason why this should not be, for genius is seldom born fully armed, and must develop by stages; nor is there any reason why the goldsmiths should not be ranked among the earlier pioneers of the Art of Engraving.

Descended from a noble family, Francesco Bartolozzi was born at Florence in 1727, according to the balance of probability, although various dates are assigned, and I suggest that he gained his first insight into art in the workrooms of his father. However that may be, he received instruction in drawing from Ferretti at Florence, and afterwards entered the Florentine Academy under Ignazio Hugford, and here he made the acquaintance of and formed friendship with Cipriani, who, in after-life, was his

brilliant coadjutor and fellow-worker. At the age of eighteen he was apprenticed to Joseph Wagner at Venice, and this marked a turning-point in his life; for, like most youths endowed with genius, he had as much to unlearn as he had to learn. Bartolozzi was, however, devoted to art, and trying as the time must have seemed, and exacting as his master is reputed to have been, it was a good time for him, and probably much of his future success was due to the severe course of training which he underwent in Venice.

At first Bartolozzi was regarded only as a line engraver, but his success in this direction must have been considerable, for he enjoyed the support of such high personages as the Emperor Francis I. of Austria, of Ferdinand IV. of Naples, and of the powerful family of the Medici. Of more concern to us is his connection with our own country, for England and Portugal, as well as Italy, can claim Bartolozzi as an artist, and this came about through Dalton, Librarian to King George III., who was astute enough to induce Bartolozzi to come to England, engaging on his own account

to pay him a salary of £300 per annum for a term of years. He had married Lucia Ferro, a Venetian lady of position, but in 1764 he came alone to England, and for a time lived with his friend Cipriani in Warwick Street, Golden Square, afterwards removing to Broad Street, Carnaby Market, and then to North End, Fulham. It has been asserted, and I think not quite justly, that "had it not been for Bartolozzi, Cipriani might have attended as chief mourner at the funeral of his own artistic fame, so much did the designer gain from the reproductions of the engraver." In some respects only this is correct, and it is accentuated by the controversy which arose with regard to the Holbein Portraits of the Illustrious Persons of the Court of Henry VIII. Dr Dibdin asserted that Bartolozzi thought he could improve everything he touched, and was fond of Italianising his faces, and asserted that the first anonymous portrait, thought to be that of Margaret Roper (Sir T. More's eldest daughter), as engraved by Bartolozzi, was not the portrait as drawn by Hans Holbein, and charged him with being "faithless,"

though he paid graceful tribute to his "peculiar and unrivalled powers."

But the fact remains that Bartolozzi did improve all that he touched, the Holbein portraits especially, supplying detail that was sorely lacking, and he cannot rightly be charged with being faithless, for he never asserted that his etchings and engravings were *facsimiles*. Chamberlaine, the Keeper of the King's Drawings, did so call them, but he of all men must have known such a statement to be incorrect. If, however, he improved on the work of the designer, so also did he on the art of the engraver. He placed stippled engraving in the first rank, and created a craze for the red stipple prints that is not likely soon to die away, and which was stimulated by the cordial appreciation of his late Royal Highness the Prince Consort.

The first great work which Bartolozzi undertook upon his arrival in England was a series of 150 etchings from Guercino's drawings in the Royal Collection, which were published by Alderman Boydell. Messrs Henry Graves & Co., the successors of this great patron of art, possess a number

of finished proofs of the Guercino etchings, about which considerable argument arose as to whether they should be rightly termed etchings or engravings. The point is a nice one, and so I quote the following definition, sent by Mr P. G. Hamerton to Mr Tuer, and published by that gentleman in his work on Bartolozzi :—

"The ordinary distinction between 'etching' and 'engraving' is not very clear, because etchers often use the burin towards the end of a piece of work, and engravers *always* use the etching point at the beginning. There is, however, a clear test of the fundamental difference, which is the following :—

"If the freedom of the bitten line is preserved to the end, if it is not sacrificed to the formalism of the burin line, the work is properly described as an etching ; but if, on the contrary, the formal and severe character of the burin line predominates, if the burin work overcomes the bitten work, and if the bitten work has been subordinate in its character from the beginning, then the result is properly called a burin engraving."

With regard to his excellent work in stipple, Bartolozzi chiefly followed the grained style, not the more customary one of clusters and grouping ; yet, as a matter

of fact, he worked in all styles, compelling the advantages of each to yield to his master-hand, and creating a medley that is surprising for its melting tenderness and harmonious effect. Turning to the coloured stippled prints, of which so many forgeries exist, Mr Tuer gives such valuable advice to the young collector, that I make no apology for reproducing it. Speaking, of course, of Bartolozzis, he says—

"Fine examples are rare, and for their production the copperplate itself was charged by the printer artist with coloured inks, a number of which he kept in little pots by his side. Each individual dot or puncture being filled with colour which in the printing was discharged on to the paper, the spaces between the specks naturally remained white. Unscrupulous vendors of reprints now foist upon the public, engravings of worn plates, printed in a uniform light tint, and afterwards hand coloured; but as the whole of the ground, including the space between the dots or specks is coloured, with the stippled work showing through, this spurious rubbish is not difficult to detect."

In 1768, Francesco Bartolozzi was elected a Royal Academician, a fact which gave great offence to Sir Robert Strange, who

thought that he was slighted, and entered an undignified public discussion of the matter. It is to me nothing short of a marvel that someone was not at hand to convince Sir Robert Strange of his folly, for, while Bartolozzi was eligible for admission, *he* was not. Bartolozzi was a painter as well as an etcher and engraver, and a good one, too; he was entitled to full Academy rank, while Sir Robert was only eligible as an associate engraver. It speaks highly for the sweetness of disposition of Bartolozzi that he never retaliated, but kept on his own even way. He had exhibited at the Society of Artists and at the Free Society, and was esteemed as an artist as well as engraver to the king, and could afford to ignore diatribes, which Strange himself bitterly repented.

Some wonderment has been occasionally expressed that the author of the Clytie, the Holbeins, the Marlborough gems, etc., should lend his genius to the production of benefit tickets, however beautiful, even for a day. But these rare specimens of his skill served a double purpose. Sometimes they were done *con amore* to aid a friend, sometimes for reward; and surely they were sound adver-

tisement. The daintiest of these productions were designed by Cipriani, and etched and worked up with the graver by Bartolozzi, often in a single day. His capacity for work was enormous; his rapidity of execution almost phenomenal; and he would chat gaily on indifferent subjects with his friends the while these exquisite examples of the engraver's art were developing beneath his hand. In some instances he received large sums, as much as one hundred guineas, for one of these tickets, and as he was as prodigal and generous as he was gifted, there is little need for speculation as to why these beautiful creations were executed.

For a time Bartolozzi was associated in partnership with his son, Gaetano, as a publisher, at 81 Great Tichfield Street, the most noteworthy production of the firm being a Bacchante, after Cipriani. He also had a large number of pupils, including such men as Thomas Cheesman, Jean M. Delattre, John Ogborne, J. H. Ramberg, J. K. Sherwin, Benjamin Smith, R. S. Marcuard, James Minasi, P. W. Tomkins, and others. Unscrupulous persons have not hesitated to engrave the name of Bartolozzi on plates

which were never touched by him, one instance being the portrait of Mrs Jordan, by John Ogborne, and in another case a genuine Bartolozzi plate was mutilated, and the name of an Irish engraver inserted in its place. Such frauds as these, unlike the coloured stipples, are rare, but the collector will do well to be on his guard respecting them.

In 1802, Bartolozzi was tempted, by an offer of a knighthood and the position of Director of the National Academy, to go to Lisbon, where he enjoyed the friendship of the king, and lived at greater ease than he had done in London. It has been asserted, though upon what foundation I have never been able to ascertain, that in his latter years he fell into poverty, but there seems little probability of this being correct, for he enjoyed a pension from the King of Portugal, and was high in favour at the Court of Lisbon. Moreover, as he himself said, he could live in luxury there with little work, while here he had to labour hard for comfort. He died on the 7th March 1815, and was buried in the Church of St Isabel at Lisbon, but the stone that marked his resting-place

was removed during repairs, and his actual place of sepulture is, I believe, unknown.

To nobility of birth Bartolozzi added kindliness of character and true genius; he has left an imperishable name, and examples of skill that may be equalled, but which are hardly likely to be excelled.

Mr. Thos. Bewick,

Restorer of the Art of

ENGRAVING ON WOOD.

CHAPTER XII

THE REVIVAL OF WOOD-ENGRAVING

WHILE English artists were making themselves famous all the world over, especially for their undisputed precedence in the method of mezzotint, the earlier art of engraving on wood had practically become moribund, and, here at least, appeared to be threatened with complete extinction. There seemed little prospect that engraving on wood would ever be practised among us again, until in August 1753, a genius was born in a little Northumbrian village on the banks of the Tyne—a genius who was not only to restore an almost forgotten art, but to lift it to a degree of dignity which it had never before attained—and that genius was Thomas Bewick! Language can hardly err in praise of Bewick, for he was, in a sense, to Art, what Shakespeare was to Letters; he pictured faithfully out of his own wonderful perception, and not at

all through the teaching of others. Before I speak of his life and work, I will recall what Ruskin said of him—"Without training, he is Holbein's equal"; and again, "I know no drawing so subtile as Bewick's since the fifteenth century, except Holbein's and Turner's." Such praise from such an authority is great indeed, but I am able to turn to another of importance.

In Leslie's *Handbook for Young Painters* the following graceful tribute appears:—

"While speaking of the English school, I must not omit to notice a truly original genius, who, though not a painter, was an artist of the highest order in his way, Thomas Bewick, the admirable designer and engraver on wood. His works, indeed, are of the smallest dimensions, but this makes it only the more surprising that so much interest could be comprised within such little spaces. The woodcuts that illustrate his books of natural history may be studied with advantage by the most ambitious votary of the highest classes of art—filled as they are by the truest feeling for Nature, and though often representing the most ordinary objects, yet never in a single instance degenerating into commonplace. The charming vignettes that ornament these books abound in incidents from real life, diversified by genuine humour, as well as by the truest

pathos—of which the single figure of a shipwrecked sailor saying his prayers on a rock, with the waves rising round him, is an instance. There is often in these little things a deep meaning that places his art on a level with styles which the world is apt to consider as greatly above it, in proof of which I would mention the party of boys playing at soldiers among graves, and mounted on a row of upright tombstones for horses; while for quaint humour, extracted from a very simple source, may be noticed a procession of geese which have just waddled through a stream, while their line of march is continued by stepping-stones. The student of landscape can never consult the works of Bewick without improvement."

It is not strictly accurate to say that Bewick was not a painter, for the water-colour drawings of his, which were exhibited at the Gallery of the Fine Art Society in 1880, and which were afterwards presented by the Misses Bewick to the British Museum, show rare ability in this direction, and are quite gems in their way. The fact remains, however, that Bewick was untaught, that he was an artist born, not made; and yet the sources of his inspiration are not far to seek when the story of his life, written by himself, is considered.

Thomas Bewick was the son of John Bewick, a respected Northumbrian farmer and small mine-owner, and was born at Cherryburn House, on the side of the river opposite to Ovingham-on-Tyne. His mother was a Miss Jane Wilson, of Ainstable, Cumberland, where her father was either curate or parish clerk, but certainly schoolmaster, and from him the future Mrs Bewick learnt Latin, and much more than was then deemed necessary to "polite learning," especially for a lady. Yet, if we seek, as we are bound to seek, for Bewick's wonderful appreciation of Nature, and rare fidelity of expression, we shall find it rather in his own love of the beautiful than in the influence of his cultured mother.

First, let him picture his home in his own words, a home familiar to us now as Ann Hathaway's cottage, or the birthplace of Burns. He says—"The house, stables, etc., stand on the west side of a little dene, at the foot of which runs a burn. The dene was embellished with a number of cherry and plum trees, which were terminated by a garden on the north. Near the house were two large ash-trees,

growing from one root; and at a little distance stood another of the same kind. At the south end of the premises was a spring well, overhung by a large hawthorn bush, behind which was a holly hedge; and further away was a little boggy dene with underwood and trees of different kinds." Near by was a rookery, and cornfields and pastures stretched eastward bordered by beautiful trees; but as Bewick bitterly remarks—"Needy gentry care little about the beauty of a country, and part of it is now, comparatively, as bare as a molehill."

Westward was the common, ablaze for miles with heather and whins, foxglove, fern and juniper, and intersected by bubbling burns, bordered by elder and willow and birch, haunts of the birds he loved to watch; while the banks gave shelter, often enough, to the otter and the badger. His love of Nature began at a very early age, and he tells how—"From the little window at my bed-head I noticed all the varying seasons of the year; and when the Spring put in I felt charmed with the music of birds, which strained their little throats to proclaim it."

It is not a little strange that the observant and intelligent boy, whose talent for sketching was well known, should have been sent to a school at Mickley, which was kept by a dull ignoramus, whose sole conception of his duty seems to have been blows and brutal punishment. Accordingly, Bewick played truant often enough, and spent days roaming the then beautiful Northumbrian hills and drinking in the delights of Nature, or fishing in the Tyne, and hunting the denizens of the banks and burns; but when another tutor, James Burn, appeared, he was tractable enough. Unfortunately, this gentleman died, and young Bewick was transferred to the care of the Rev. C. Gregson, Vicar of Ovingham, who, though stern enough at first, afterwards became his friend through life.

I have dwelt thus fully upon the child-days of Bewick, because otherwise it is almost impossible to understand and to properly appreciate the work of this extraordinary man. The great point is that his love of drawing was never encouraged in any way, the subjects in which he was instructed had little interest for him, and his school-

days were generally marked by floggings. His chance came at last, when at the age of fourteen, that is, in the year 1767, he was apprenticed to Ralph Beilby, engraver, of Newcastle-on-Tyne. Yet he received little instruction, and here is what he says on this point—"For some time after I entered the business I was employed in copying Copeland's Ornaments, and this was the only kind of drawing upon which I ever had a lesson given to me from anyone. I was never a pupil to any drawing-master, and had not even a lesson from William Beilby or his brother Thomas, who, along with their other profession, were also drawing-masters. In the latter years of my apprenticeship my master kept me so fully employed that I never had any opportunity for such a purpose at which I felt much grieved and disappointed." Even under these inauspicious circumstances he found one great opportunity, for although Beilby was a good engraver on silver, copper, etc., and skilful at cutting dies, armorial bearings, seals, etc., he was impatient of, and unsuccessful in, engraving on wood, and used to turn this work over to his more apt apprentice.

Thus Bewick did much work for Thomas Saint, the printer, and to his joy he designed as well as cut the blocks for the *Story-teller*, *Gay's Fables* and *Select Fables*. Beilby thought so much of this work that he sent a few impressions to the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, and Bewick was offered either a gold medal or seven guineas premium, which latter he chose. When the period of his apprenticeship was over, he wandered on foot through Scotland, Oliver Goldsmith fashion, or as his friends said, "on tramp." The experience was good, however, and increased that knowledge and love of the beautiful which marks all his work. On 1st October 1776, he arrived in London, where several old friends were established, and found work waiting for him, and a staunch friend in Isaac Tayler. Yet though his prospects were good and even brilliant, life in the metropolis was by no means to his taste, and although his departure meant a rupture with Tayler, he returned to Newcastle in June 1777, and shortly afterwards entered into partnership with his old master, Ralph Beilby.

The first success of Bewick came through

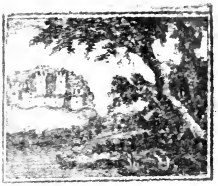
a request of Dr Hutton, of Newcastle, afterwards famous for his work at Woolwich, that the cuts for his work on *Mensuration* should be engraved on wood. I have pointed out that Beilby was not by any means proficient in wood-engraving, and consequently the order was passed by him to his apprentice. From that time Bewick went steadily forward, cutting block headings for newspapers, bill-heads, and oddments of all sorts, and producing, in almost every instance, work that was alike original and excellent. It was his cut of the Old Hound which obtained the premium for the best specimen of wood-engraving in 1775, although *Gay's Fables* were not published until 1779. Success induced Bewick to project his *History of Quadrupeds*, published in 1790, and this passed through three editions in three years. To aid him in this work the fine natural history museum of Marmaduke Tonstal, of Eycliffe, was placed at his disposal. He also engraved on copper the plates on Natural History which appear in Consett's *Tour through Sweden, Lapland, etc.*, and surpassed himself in the Whitley Large Ox, and the Chillingham Bull. In conjunction with his

brother John, who became apprentice when he joined in partnership with Beilby, he prepared the blocks for *Æsop's Fables*, and woodcuts for Goldsmith's *Traveller* and *Deserted Village*, and for Parnell's *Hermit*. In 1797, the first part of *British Birds* was issued, Beilby supplying the letterpress and Bewick the woodcuts, and the same year the partnership was dissolved, by mutual consent; so that when Part II., *British Water Birds*, appeared, both the blocks and literary matter were produced by Bewick. It is but right to admit that Bewick was helped, to a considerable extent, by his pupils, notably by Luke Clennell, also by Nesbit, Harvey, Robert Johnson, Ransom and Hole; but his was the master-hand and his the designs, and to him belongs the largest credit. His brother John did excellent work, notably the cuts for *The Looking Glass of the Mind*, and for the *Blossoms of Morality*; but of all his pupils, Clennell most nearly attained to the skill of the master.

For a long time the banknotes issued by Messrs Ridley & Co. were engraved by Bewick, and he was offered a position in the Bank of England to carry out similar work,

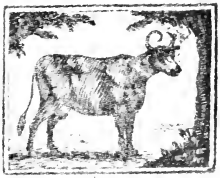
The Agreement.

The Knights.



Palace.

Jack Quin.



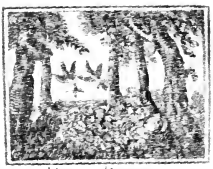
Cow.

Raree Show.

Babes in the Wood.

Kings-Arms.

Charity.

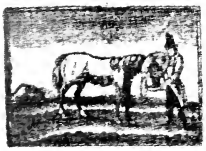


Dying Babes.

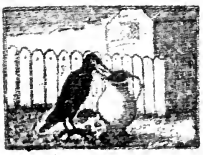
Lady.

Gentleman.

Coach.



Man & Horse.



Crow & Jug.

Owls.

BURSLEM: Printed and sold by JOHN TREGORTHA

but refused sturdily to quit Newcastle. It is difficult to select any special woodcuts of his as possessed of more than the usual interest which pertained to his work, for all was good; but the Kyloe Ox is awarded the palm by many experts. The unfortunate Chillingham Bull, of which only a few impressions on vellum were taken before the block split, is a work of rare merit; but to my mind, his British Water Birds are quite equal to any other of his performances. He excelled in tail-pieces, each one of which conveys a story or a moral, and which constitute a phase of Art which no one since has equalled. As a writer in *Blackwood's Magazine* for June 1828, remarked—"Happy old man! The delight of childhood, manhood, decaying age! A moral in every tail-piece, a sermon in every vignette." It is singular that his last cut, which was unfinished, was that of an old horse, and was called "Waiting for Death."

If we wonder at much of the beauty of Bewick's work, we can easily solve the riddle, for the answer is, that his success was due to his intense love of Nature.

Read his own glowing words on this point—

"Had I been a painter, I never would have copied the works of 'old masters' or others, however highly they might be esteemed. I would have gone to Nature for all my patterns; for she exhibits an endless variety, not possible to be surpassed, and scarcely ever to be truly imitated. . . . The painter need not roam far from his home, in any part of our beautiful isles, to meet with plenty of charming scenes from which to copy Nature—either on an extended or a limited scale—and in which he may give full scope to his genius and to his pencil, either in animate or inanimate subjects. His search will be crowned with success in the romantic ravine, the placid holme, the hollow dell, or amongst the pendant foliage of the richly-ornamented dene, or by the sides of burns which roar or dash along, or run murmuring from pool to pool through their pebbly beds; all this bordered, perhaps, by a background of ivy-covered, hollow oaks (thus clothed as if to hide their age), of elms, willows and birch, which seem kindly to offer shelter to an undergrowth of hazel, whins, broom, juniper and heather, with the wild-rose, the woodbine, and the bramble, and beset with clumps of fern and foxglove; while the edges of the mossy braes are covered with a profusion of wild flowers 'born to blush unseen,' which peep out amongst the creeping groundlings — the blaeberry, the wild

strawberry, the harebell, and the violet; but I feel a want of words to enable the pen to give an adequate description of the beauty and simplicity of these neglected spots, which Nature has planted as if to invite the admiration of such as have hearts and eyes to appreciate and enjoy these her exquisite treats, while she may, perhaps, smile at the formal, pruning efforts of the gardener, as well as doubt whether the pencil of the artist will ever accomplish a correct imitation. But be all this as it may, she has spread out her beauties to feast the eyes and to invite the admiration of all mankind, and to whet them up to an ardent love of all her works. How often have I, in my angling excursions, loitered upon such sunny braes, lost in ecstasy, and wishing I could impart to others the pleasures I felt on such occasions; but they must see with their own eyes to feel as I felt, and to form an opinion how far the scenes depictured by poets fall short of the reality."

Thomas Bewick died at his residence near Windmill Hills, Gateshead, on 8th November 1828, and was buried in Ovingham Churchyard, within sight of the old home he loved so well.

With the revival of the art of wood-engraving in England by the gifted Bewick, an important period in the History of Engraving is brought to a fitting close,

since the subject is so vast and so ever-expanding that any attempt to deal seriously with it *en masse*, from its known beginning to the present day, would be foredoomed to failure. There are so many workers who are, or were, producers of good results, although they can hardly be classed as masters of the art, that it would be unthankful and ungenerous, not to say impossible, either to discriminate between them or to decide which should be included and which left outside my pages. As it is, I am conscious of many sins of omission, for the most that can be done when handling so large a matter is to tread slowly, steadily, step by step, stopping only at those great artists who stand, as it were, for milestones on the path of inquiry. It was because I was aware at the beginning of this task that I could not hope to do more than lift the fringe of the veil which hides the secrets of early engraving from view, that I contented myself with its advent in Europe, and endeavoured, as far as is possible, to steer clear of either speculation or controversy.

It is, naturally, not easy to avoid one or

the other, for past arguments have, in many cases, been so flimsy and so plainly partisan, that it is difficult to treat them calmly if one treats them seriously; and, further, when one is groping in a maze of mystification, probability is the only factor which points to any sort of conclusion. So the disappointing fact is reached that, no matter how deeply we have delved, we have not, thus far, unearthed the precious nugget of truth which we so earnestly seek; although in the search errors have been discovered and removed in sufficient number to justify the labour involved. I am reminded here of the old story of how a poor farmer dreamt that if he dug at the root of a certain apple-tree in his orchard, he would find gold. The dream made a deep impression upon him, and as he could not tell which tree was indicated, he dug at the root of each trunk in his orchard, and yet failed to find the treasure which he sought, and, cursing his folly, he left the trenches open for a time, and only filled them up when he could no longer endure the taunts of his neighbours. In that interval light and air had been admitted to the roots of the ancient trees,

heretofore almost barren, and the following season saw each one of them bending beneath a weight of fruit ; so that he did indeed find gold, though not in the particular way in which he had expected to discover it. A like result may, and probably will, attend our inquiry into the History of Engraving ; for revival of interest, alone, tends to beget discovery, and readers have, by its form of publication, been placed in touch with a subject hitherto dealt with only in works which are practically accessible only to the few through the medium of our great institutions and public libraries. This fact alone, sufficiently assures me that a popular work on the subject of engraving was needed.

I noticed at the beginning of this work the assumptions of Du Halde, of Papillon, of Jansen, and of Evelyn, that the art of engraving on metal and on wood was known to the Chinese one thousand one hundred years before the birth of Christ, and pointed out that the Hebrews were experts in the art three hundred and fifty years before the date assigned to the Chinese invention ; but engraving and the production of prints from

engraving are two different things, and proof of the date of the latter operation is still lacking. Dim allusions to Thibet are as little satisfactory as the Chinese theory, although the monasteries of Lhassa may have much to reveal; but this, equally, may be the case with the only partially explored cities of the Toltecs and of the Aztecs on the great American Continent, since these races appear to have been quite as learned as were the erudite mystics of the East. I am quite willing to admit that to European nations, and to most Asiatic peoples as well, Thibet is, practically, a sealed book, whose clasps no one has, as yet, completely unlocked. If we have had peeps inside of a half-opened cover, it is all we have had; and to suppose that the Llamas will allow their sacred places to be entered and their secrets—if they have any—to be revealed, if they can help it, is to presume the most wildly improbable events that can occur. Presuming that such places are entered by us, or by any other civilised Power, it by no means follows that manuscripts, books or engravings (if any) will be

revealed. These, of all things, are portable, and if there be a desire to hide can be hidden. So far, we have no sound reason for supposing that, in the matter of engraving, Thibet has anything to conceal. To argue, as has been argued, that the Eastern peoples must have been acquainted with engraving because Marco Polo does not say that they were not; that because the Venetians traded with Tartary and Thibet, therefore they learnt the art from the Llamas, who inspired the Cunios, who inspired the goldsmiths, who inspired Finiguerra, etc., is to reduce the logic to absurdity, and is an even less valuable contribution to literature than *The House that Jack Built*, which doggerel, by the way, seems to have inspired the authors of these theories.

It would be easy to waste a lifetime over the conflicting claims of countries for the honour of having produced the first European engraver, and to write on the work of Turrecremata in 1467, of Valturius in 1472, of Pfister in 1461, and of the doubtful Coster in 1440, but we have historical evidence in favour of the Cunio theory, dated

1285, and with that, until better evidence offers, it is well to be content. That more conclusive information respecting engraving both in Europe and in the East will be forthcoming I firmly believe; and if I may venture upon speculation, I fancy that the truth will be found hidden away in forgotten muniment boxes of princely or noble families, or in the archives of corporations, or perhaps in the unpublished records of Pekin or of the Vatican. Of course, this is sheer speculation; I have not a peg upon which safely to hang such a theory, yet it is not an unfair deduction, when we remember the many "finds" of literary and art treasures that have been made within recent years. I mention two of the world's greatest storehouses of art, not because I have ever heard that they contain any such evidence as we seek, but because I do believe that no living soul has any notion of the values that are therein concealed. Here I may fittingly note that almost everyone, rich or poor, can aid in the inquiry into the History of Engraving and all the side issues involved; the rich by expert examination of the

books and prints which they possess, and the poor by ceasing to regard old and possibly dust-grimed volumes and pictures as valueless, and by taking the trouble to find out what they are. We have seen, in the case of the broken-up volume of the *Biblia Pauperum*, the *Ars Moriendi* and the *Apocalypse*, how serious the loss of a date becomes; we have also seen, in the story of the Cunios, how much depends upon the mention of the muniments of Faruza of Count Alberico Cunio in 1285. The bulk of conclusive evidence is, in the first instance, built up from trifles, and the smallest data will not be unimportant if it sheds even the feeblest gleam of light upon so much as is dark in the history of Art.

While I am ending this section of my history with Bewick, I do not wish it to be thought that my task is concluded. The masters of the nineteenth century have yet to be dealt with, and the study of the past can never be relaxed, for none can tell what revelations are in store. All that I am doing now is to close the subject for a time, to return to it, I trust, ere long, and to bring

the story up to our own day. I am well aware that, as I have penned it, my history is but a skeleton after all, but it is, I hope, a solid framework upon which the student can build to his advantage.

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